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Thomas
Thomas Jefferson World Citizen.

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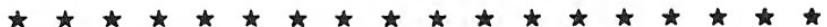
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THOMAS JEFFERSON

World Citizen

Sometimes a Virginian, sometimes an

By ELBERT D. THOMAS
CHINESE POLITICAL THOUGHT



THOMAS JEFFERSON
World Citizen

SENATOR ELBERT D. THOMAS

MODERN AGE BOOKS

NEW YORK

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TO PEGGY

April eleventh

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

past, deserves a place in this acknowledgment: Major Earl B. Wixcey, Stanley Murphy, Kenneth C. Robertson, Mrs. Wayne C. Grover, G. Ernest Bourne, W. Alan Thody, Chiyo Thomas, Lieutenant Harry I. Ravitz, T. Odon Mathews, Margaret J. Slevin, George Nisson, Mrs. Lawrence Lee Hansen, Paul L. Badger, Elaine Hatch Richards, and Professor H. Grant Ivins. Most of the members of this staff have been at some time my students.

Professor Ivins, who has borne the brunt of the final preparation, is entitled to chief credit for the entire volume. Grant Ivins and I were companions in Japan for several years. Once we were snowed in together near the top of Mount Fuji. At such a time, when there is nothing to do but think, talk, and wait, men can really exchange ideas. Our many experiences in common, and strangely enough our subsequent diverse experiences, have led us to a oneness of thought about many things. We both see the need of an historical approach to the study of world unity. We are ardent admirers of Jefferson and the promises which Jefferson's governmental, political, social, and economic theories offer to the world. We agree that Jefferson's philosophy crystallizes many great universals. Since we have seen the influence of the dominating thought of Eastern Asia upon the great civilizations of China and Japan, we want to make sure that our great American philosopher shall never be allowed to bind us in our thought for "two thousand years." We wish also to prove that those who made the American Revolution meaningful recognized, as does the Constitution, that men and women as persons have rights inherent in their personality. To Grant Ivins and to the members of my staff who have co-operated in producing this unit of thought, in keeping with our dream, this book is dedicated.

—E. D. T.



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Introduction

The World as a Unit

THE PEOPLE OF the United States are about to dedicate a memorial to Thomas Jefferson, a monument to stand in the national capital beside those erected to the memory of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In this act of recognition, they have placed Jefferson side by side with the two names which have been recognized as cornerstones of the American cult.

President Coolidge once declared that the great hope of this country rests in its spiritual development; that nations without spirituality perish. By this he may have meant that, to be great, a nation must form a great cult, must develop national traditions. Thus will its great men never die; its valiant deeds live on forever. All living human institutions may be said to have souls; and when the institution is a nation, its soul is made up of the words, acts, and lives of those among its great who represent its universal desires, ideals, and inspiration.

The lives of two men have been forever placed, by almost universal acceptance, in the foundation of our national cult, and mark two corners of its base. Why has America definitely given to Washington and Lincoln these places in our

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American national cult? Theodore Roosevelt, I think, has best answered that question for us. "There have been other men as great," said this strenuous American, "and other men as good, but in all the history of mankind there are no other two great men as good as these, and no other two good men as great." We know from reading further from Roosevelt what he meant by the two adjectives "good" and "great," for we see that he thought that both Washington and Lincoln possessed all the gentler virtues exhibited by good men who lack strength and all the strong qualities exhibited by the "towering masters of mankind."

Let us now turn to a consideration of that cornerstone of our imagined national cult edifice on which we have engraved, for the present, by the erection of this memorial, the name of Thomas Jefferson. In the making of this great nation, what were Jefferson's own ideas about the essential factors? We find the answer to this question in Jefferson's epitaph. At his own request, it was made to read, "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and the father of the University of Virginia." In a life full of honors, of activities, here we find democracy's greatest advocate recognizing as his greatest achievements his work for national independence, for freedom of worship, and for enlightenment of the mind. In this pride as father of a university, do we not see his acceptance of the theory of a reasoned, planned, thoughtful, and intellectual life for both man and the nation? The philosophy of progress is accepted, the perfectibility of man and government is hinted, and both man and the nation occupy a place of dignity in the eternal scheme of things as they were rarely before so privileged in the philosophies of previous thinkers. If our Constitution, now the oldest constitution

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on earth and the fundamental American institution, has stabilized itself by becoming a living organism, the Jeffersonian philosophy has contributed much to this happy result.

The laying of a sure foundation for the building of the American national cult must be the real reason for the erection of a national monument. It must symbolize the great concepts upon which our fundamental national philosophy is based. In honoring Jefferson with such a monument America therefore honors herself, for she thus recognizes that Thomas Jefferson's life and thought reflect an ideal of American democracy as the American people would have it.

In a democracy the national cult must rest upon men who, in the minds and hearts of the people, have become paragons of civic and national virtue. When we give Jefferson a place with Washington and Lincoln, we honor a man who, like them, was chosen by the people as their President. But the office these men held is not what made them great. It was, rather, their personal qualities as men. Washington, trusted by all who knew him, leader of men, first not only in peace and war but "in the hearts of his countrymen": Lincoln, plain, wise, just, and firm, the least like a tyrant of all the men who, like him, were ever called tyrants: Jefferson, the good neighbor, the sane politician, the lover of art and music; sometimes philosopher, sometimes inventor, sometimes statesman, sometimes author; successful diplomat, founder of institutions, participant in all the affairs of man, uncompromising defender of freedom; prototype of the democracy he dreamed and planned:—these are the men whom we place at the corners of our national cult.

Should not the American cult be built on men, men who reflect what the Romans called virtue, and men who were what their lives and their words so fully bespeak, loyal to

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their ideals? It may be "foolish sentimentality," but I should rather make my model a Washington who could not lie, a Lincoln who could pardon a tired soldier boy, and a Jefferson who chose to be known as the author of a statute to guarantee religious freedom—these men for whom there was a single code for individuals and collective society—than the efficient, unscrupulous dictator whom so many in our world seem to honor today. Virtue, goodness, honesty, and truth in the leaders of the state must be the basis of any lasting civilization.

The emphasis on Thomas Jefferson as an American Founding Father has resulted in a lack of appreciation of the great democrat as a world figure. Jefferson a *world citizen*? Why not? That his thinking was in tune with the great universals of his time, and of all times, makes him no less an American. It only adds support to what all American history proves, the universal appeal of his ideals to thoughtful persons the world over.

In 1814, Jefferson wrote to his friend, Thomas Lieper, "Is it, then, become criminal, the moral wish that the torrents of blood this man is shedding in Europe, the sufferings of so many human beings, good as ourselves, on whose necks he is trampling, the burnings of ancient cities, devastations of great countries, the destruction of law and order, and demoralization of the world, should be arrested, even if it should place our peace a little further distant? No. You and I cannot differ in wishing that Russia, and Sweden, and Denmark, and Germany, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, and even England, may retain their independence." And in that same letter he wrote, "It cannot be to our interest that all Europe should be reduced to a single monarchy."

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Surely, when he wrote this letter, he was thinking of world affairs with an interest which encompassed far more than Virginia or even America. It is evident that he realized the influence that victory for Bonaparte in Europe was certain to have on conditions in America. He knew that America could not be indifferent to the struggle then going on in Europe. Entirely aside from its effect on our war with Great Britain, Jefferson was vitally interested in Napoleon's attempt to make himself master of Europe.

Does anyone doubt, today, that war anywhere in the world is of universal concern? Is there a corner of the earth so far removed that every person is not affected by a war that goes on there? Does anyone, today, doubt that an economic disaster anywhere in the world has its repercussions everywhere? Is there a country so distant that a general disintegration of its economic structure is not felt in every country of the world? Does anyone doubt that the sentiment of the decent majority of the world must constitute the constructive spirit of world control? Does anyone doubt that the rebuke of the many must restrain those who would trespass the rules of world morality? Can anyone, today, doubt the fact of world unity?

And if a thoughtful study of history reveals the fact that the world has been much more of a unit than previous interpretation has indicated, that there has been manifest a sort of economic unity, an evident political unity, and time after time a unity of thought, it may be that we shall discover a new significance in many of the great events of history, a new universality in the messages of the great world leaders. With this new interpretation in mind, may we not look upon Thomas Jefferson as a world citizen, without lessening his reputation as the great "Apostle of Ameri-

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canism"? If such an attempt were to make him any less an American, I would not wish to undertake it, and no American would wish to see it undertaken. But if such a study shows Jefferson to have been the American apostle of a great world cause, one inspired by thoughts that stamp him as one of the great "universals," then his great freedoms, his liberty, his "man destined for society," become living concepts which all the world can understand and to which all the world can aspire. He thus becomes America's first great gift to mankind. That Jesus belongs to the whole world makes Him no less the Man of Galilee. Thomas Jefferson, world citizen, is no less the great American.

Jefferson's day was one of struggle for freedom. That spirit was articulate in England; it was surging upward in France. And this great upsurge of liberty reached its climax in the utterances of Thomas Jefferson, who spoke, not for America alone, but for the entire Western world.

The only time the world, as a whole, attempted worldwide control by means of the majority opinion of the nations, the attempt was called a dream of the idealist. Still, we must not overlook the fact that through the League of Nations sixty nations have counseled together and international disputes of war-making possibilities have been adjusted by an international court. The League's political instruments are said to have failed. Such a statement must always be greatly qualified. The accomplishments of the League must not be overlooked. Many of its committees have functioned effectively. The work of the League will not soon be forgotten. The spirit and principles which brought it into being still survive, and have acquired new meaning now that another war, world-wide in extent, shot through with complex social, economic, and political revolution, has descended upon us.

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The great rush for American naturalization, caused by the uncertain conditions prevailing in many foreign countries, has led, too frequently, to a thoughtless acceptance of American citizenship as a mere legal matter—so many years a resident, first papers, second papers, then getting by a judge by answering a few questions on our history and our Constitution. American citizenship means more than that; it means adherence to certain ideals, partaking of a certain spirit—ideals and spirit which were personified in Thomas Jefferson.

My father, like thousands of others, was an American before he left the Old Country. Already he had caught the spirit of the New World; it was the land of liberty, the land of promise, the land of opportunity, where all could contribute to the building of a world of free men, free nations, and free peoples. Here life could be made purposeful by recognition of a single morality for men, whether acting collectively or alone. It was this fact which caused a sister nation to build for us the Goddess of Liberty, not a mere light that shineth on a hill from afar, but a signal of hope and optimism to all mankind.

I wonder if the thoughtful in France today are not looking with a new hope to their Goddess left with us here in the West? Surely this symbol of a better world, placed with us for safekeeping, must shine with greater meaning than ever it has before. Perhaps some future poet of France, with that French subtlety which took our Liberty from the battlefield and made her the Goddess of culture, will say, "We gave her to you to keep for us so that, when we wandered from the way, we could be guided back again. That which was sweet and dear in life we did not appreciate when it was ours. Now that it is lost, we know its worth. If you will help us to get it back, we promise we will not withhold

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it from others." The French, like some Americans, thought freedom was for them alone. No, freedom is for all. Like the greatest of all the gifts of the gods, if we are selfish with it, we lose it.

I hope this book may reflect that concept of Jefferson's philosophy which has guided me in the Gospel I preached, the Americanism I taught, the patriotism I directed, the people and State I have represented, and the deeds I have tried to live—whether in my life as a student in one of our public school systems (Jefferson's dream); as a Main Street merchant, when I learned the simple ideal of American economic life, that only he who earns can honestly and completely enjoy; as a missionary who accepted his theory that a faith based upon reason and understanding is the only lasting one; as a teacher, learning each day to appreciate more fully the American life by teaching it, and explaining the culture of other lands and peoples in a spirit of appreciation rather than of comparison; as a soldier and a military administration officer, who wanted not only to win a war but also to build Americans by making more complete and thoughtful the American youth while under arms; as a public official, who admires Cleveland because he taught that public office was a public trust, and who likes to think of an election as America's way of calling men to serve.

While studying Confucius's *Grand Course*, in preparation of my book *Chinese Political Thought*, I was struck by the possibility of translating a certain Chinese character, which had always been rendered "was," as "will be." From the language standpoint, such a translation was entirely proper, but every Chinese and student of Chinese I consulted assured me that it could not be done, that it never had been done, and that it would change Confucius from a historian

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of China's past into one of the world's earliest Utopian writers and introduce into the history of Chinese thought the alien concept of progress. It might even start that nation looking into the future, instead of worshiping the past! When I asked my Chinese friends, if the *Grand Course* was really history, to tell me when and where the conditions described therein happened, no one knew. I have not been ridiculed for this unorthodox translation, and with the revolutionary outlook in China contributing to a change of attitude, the idea seems to be here to stay. When in January 1941 I heard a great modern Chinese philosopher quote Confucius over the radio and refer to the latter's description of the condition of better human relationships as a future experience for men to work toward, rather than as a blissful state in some Golden Age of the dead past, I was certain that I had not been wrong.

A similar changed attitude toward the possibility of world unity is essential if that world-wide brotherhood, dream of all past ages, is ever to be realized. Just as the Chinese insisted on putting their dream of a better society into the forgotten past, and so made it a mere essay on bad history, so have we, while hoping and praying for a better day, taught the history of the world—a history of nothing but division and strife—as if that day were impossible. But with our increased appreciation of the actual events of history we are beginning more and more to discover certain threads of world unity that have been growing stronger with the ages. I myself made this discovery quite by accident. I was teaching a group of graduate students a course in Asiatic Nations, and since the field was so unfamiliar to them, I tried to connect my lectures, at least in time, with more familiar history. With this in mind, I made out a simple chart with such headings as Egypt, India, Persia, China,

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Japan, Korea, Malaya, Rome, and Greece. Starting with the twenty-fourth century B.C., I selected some great centuries that stood out in the minds of the students. I found, to my surprise, that the same sorts of things were happening at different places at the same time. During the great periods of history the world seemed to act as some sort of unit. Other studies of certain given periods, undertaken by some of our leading scholars, have resulted in similar revelations.*

For years I held that the whole world is the only safe economic unit to consider; that if we have revolution, unrest, and stoppage of buying power in any part of the world, it will affect all parts. I have long believed that we must cure the money evil in India and China if we are to have financial stability in Europe and America. It is not difficult for the world to see, in times like the present, that war anywhere is actually a concern to people everywhere; but there are no statesmen in the world today big enough to suggest a new world, who dare go before their people and teach unselfishness to the extent of suggesting that we make

* In the Preface of his book *Rome and China*, Teggart says, "The evidence assembled in the pages following has reference only to the period from 58 B.C. to A.D. 107. Within these decades every barbarian uprising in Europe followed the outbreak of war either on the eastern frontiers of the Roman empire or in the 'Western Regions' of the Chinese. Moreover, the correspondence in events was discovered to be so precise that, whereas wars in the Roman East were followed uniformly and always by outbreaks on the lower Danube and the Rhine, wars in the eastern T'ien Shan were followed uniformly and always by outbreaks on the Danube between Vienna and Budapest. In the period here referred to, invasions or uprisings occurred on the Roman frontiers in Europe on forty occasions. On nine of these occasions disturbances on the upper Danube followed wars at Guchen and Turfan, in the eastern T'ien Shan. On thirty-one occasions disturbances both on the Rumanian Danube and on the Rhine followed wars on the eastern frontiers of the Roman empire, more especially in Syria or Armenia." (Page viii.)

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living standards good in China and India in order that we may make living standards better in America and Europe.

The world must come to know that squalor, disease, low standards of living, war, poverty anywhere on this earth are a threat to higher standards everywhere. We all see it but we are afraid to do anything about it, because our habits of thought will not permit us to think in such new terms.*

Jefferson foresaw the struggle democracy would face. He had full faith in its ultimate victory. He knew that the realization of a society and government based upon the dignity, worth, and freedom of the individual meant a struggle with economic wealth, political power, religious bondage, and social inequality. One hundred and fifty years of democratic government in America finds us still fighting for the complete liberation of man and the full enjoyment of the economic, political, social, and mental freedoms of which Jefferson's system gave promise.

But America has made a great advance. We have, at least, learned that a man may have many loyalties—which is the essence of freedom—without injuring the state or impairing the well-being or peace of mind of his fellow citizens. America has taught us that we can associate—yes, even enjoy our association—with those who differ with us in political, social, religious, and economic views. In practice there may be exceptions, but in theory our schools, our luncheon clubs, our labor unions and businessmen's associations, all prove the essence of freedom. American citizenship, complex in its nature, has, in fact, enlarged the per-

* At a meeting of the Interparliamentary Union in Budapest I was surprised at the burst of applause that greeted my suggestion that the phrase "exploitation of backward peoples" in a resolution be changed to read "development of backward peoples" and that we also change our habits of thought in regard to this problem.

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sonality of the individual until today all men in America represent many aspects of life and many loyalties, so that all persons are, by virtue of their freedom, pluralistic in nature.*

Now comes an external challenge to all this for which America stands. The challenge as such is not new. It is very, very old. It represents, in its essence, the enslavement of the individual, the enforced transformation of this man of many loyalties in this life of complexity into a man who must obey a single will and observe simple loyalty to a single cause. The single-will theory, we are told, may bring strength to the group; all may go forward together to higher and better levels. Spiritualized, all parts of the whole may be saved by the perfection of the whole. There is unity because under the single-will theory there is but one objective, the glorification of one will in accomplishment of one purpose and the salvation of all by forced submission to this single will, objective, and purpose. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton has Lucifer offer this way of salvation to mankind.† No man can be free, no man can be saved, except as part of the whole. Only one intelligence is needed, that of the leader. That, in theory, is the essence of the single-will philosophy. It is the very antithesis of democracy, which demands that there be many independent intelligences. And today it again presents democracy, in its basic theory, with its greatest challenge.

* Since the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, dual citizenship has been recognized: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States . . . are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." It was in order to do away with a similar Federal system that Hitler destroyed the Federal States in Germany and abolished the right to have more than a single loyalty.

† See also *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, Chapter III, verses 22-28.

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I think democracy will survive this struggle. I see in the forces that would destroy it merely a revitalization of old forces, but with this difference: it is now admitted by all that the two systems cannot exist in the world side by side, as they have in the past. World-wide conquest and control is the slogan of one side and "the four freedoms everywhere" is the answer of the other. The clash between these two philosophies now is going on to a finish.

Thomas Jefferson and his principles are to be given a world test. Now, after one hundred and fifty years, we see plainly that Jefferson's doctrines were not merely the reactions of an individual to the stimuli presented by life in the Virginia backwoods of 1800. They were the gospel of freedom for man, consistent with his nature and with the conditions of his life everywhere on earth. If the promises of the struggle now taking place are to be fulfilled, it is essential that we view Jefferson as a great world citizen. Only on the principles of Jefferson can freedom be established in the world. The people who call themselves free and who say they are fighting for liberty are determined to bring about the dawn of a better day for mankind. The new winds that are blowing through Europe and Asia, giving vitality and purpose to a struggle against great odds, are winds which carry the Jeffersonian doctrines. These winds give promise of shattering that social order which gave lip service to democracy but hand and heart service to special privilege. If the growth of the idea of the single will is to be stopped, it must be stopped by those who know what they are fighting for. They must not stop fighting until they have won the peace as well as the war. That peace must be for men, women, and children, as Jefferson understood these words.

With the thinking of four hundred million Chinese

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reoriented from "was" to "will be"; with Asia's other hundreds of millions turning to the abolition of caste, the discovery of the importance of the individual, the struggle for human rights; with Great Britain saved from destruction by the democratic strength of her commonwealth children and of her free daughter, who had rebelled against her aristocracy of privilege; with Europe and Japan's tasting the blessings, the costs, the efficiency, and the sacrifices of the New Order—perhaps at last the people of the world and even we at home will be in a frame of mind to take seriously the meaning of Woodrow Wilson's great war slogan, that we "make the world safe for democracy." When that day comes, may the leaders of that great movement be students of Jefferson, and share his faith in God and his fellowmen. If we are then satisfied with a half-way new world we shall all be fighting again in another generation. The technique for a better world is here; the spirit for it is universal.

Fifty-five determined men created our Federal system. There must be fifty-five determined men somewhere who can do for the world what the Founding Fathers did for thirteen poor, discouraged, disunited, unequal states in America. But I am shouted down with cries of "We do not want that!" Well, what do we want? Shall it be "normalcy" again? We wanted a new world but we were unwilling to give up the old. England wanted to prevent aggression but was unwilling to try to make "sanctions" work. Italy wanted a new place in the world, but forgetting the advice of her own Machiavelli—never to invite help from afar for the helper never leaves—she has lost her own place in the world. These have been the fruits of "normalcy."

In America, in our intense desire to live in a new world of peace, we took away from ourselves the right to make moral decisions. We tried to treat aggressors and victims

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alike, regardless of moral issues involved. But without morality there is no America. The new world will not be brought about by inaction, but by action. If Jeffersonian democracy is to become world-wide, it must have aggressive defenders in the world.

World economic and physical unity is an unavoidable fact. World social, legal, and cultural unity has been more a fact than is generally realized. The world has long tended to emphasize the differences between the various countries. An entirely new picture of the world would appear if we should undertake to point out the similarities.

My thesis in this little study is simply this: that there has been much more unity in world affairs than most people realize; that some concepts, in their very nature, must be meant for universal application; that Jeffersonian Democracy is such a concept; and that Jefferson's interests were world-wide and not particular. If this thesis is accepted, there follows another: that democracy is essential to world unity. It is only on the basis of the great principle of individual rights that world unity can come out of governmental habits and organization. A man must enjoy at least four freedoms to be in any true sense a man. He may give over political rule to one man to make war or to many men to plan for peace. He may allow the rich or the worker in any community to have control of the common interests. But in so delegating power, he must not relinquish the fundamental liberties on which democracy depends.

World unity does not mean a world of bliss; it means a world much like our own America, where strife, litigation, contest, competition, struggle, strikes, and clashes of all kinds of interests go hand in hand with splendid and peaceful co-operation in fifty-odd political jurisdictions; where

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men have complex citizenship and some no citizenship, yet all stand as individuals before the law; where states pull against each other, some alone, some in regions of interest, yet all unite for the common good.

I may see a larger and more comprehensive example of unity before I die, but I do not expect to see a better working one. I love to read of utopias. I am a believer in the "Grand Course"—the Millennium—but it will not come by fiat. It will come from struggle, planning, experiment, and co-operation. I am not one to despair when the world seems to falter on its way to the attainment of such an objective. It would indicate an ignorance of history to expect complete success for so great an undertaking without many an apparent failure. I have full faith in the attainment of new world unity. But this better world can never come without the development of the concept of the importance of the individual. Democracy, with Jefferson's four freedoms, is essential to such an attainment. As he held the key to the successful working of this great federation of states and distant territories, so, I believe, he set forth the formula for successful world-wide unity of the nations.

On the walls of the rotunda of the Jefferson Memorial the plan called for four spaces on which were to be inscribed quotations from Jefferson, designed to set forth the American political philosophy which he so clearly expounded. The work of choosing these inscriptions devolved upon the members of the Memorial Commission and, as one of that group, I became actively interested in the selection of suitable material for these panels. When I began to review the writings from which the desired quotations might be chosen, I came to realize, even more fully than ever before, how completely Jefferson covered the field of

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American political thought. Yet I found no brief statements which seemed to me exactly to answer the requirements of a suitable inscription.

I seemed unable also to find four units that satisfied me, so I hit upon the idea of turning all four panels into what might be termed a single statement. I first gathered together a good many pages of quotations from Jefferson's letters and other writings, statements which covered the entire field of American political thought. Time after time I pared these statements down, always trying to retain the full import of the quotations. To put the entire philosophy of Jefferson into four hundred of his own words was no small task, but after a tenth such condensation I finally achieved a statement with which I was fairly well satisfied.

In this statement I not only gathered together those principles which reflect America as she is today, but I also made, I think, a unit of Jefferson's political philosophy. Every word was Jefferson's except the quotation from the Declaration of Independence, which he admits was generalized, and for which we must give some credit to his associates. It was interesting, indeed, to note what a great number of political concepts were crowded into these few words and how they echoed the best in American tradition. For example, the student will immediately recognize the following: references to the Declaration, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Northwest Proviso. He will find expressed here the concepts of the sovereignty of the people, liberty, freedom, equality before the law, equality of the sexes, freedom of mind and religion, no religious qualifications for officeholding, the condemnation of slavery, civil rights not dependent upon religious beliefs, man's relationship to government, his relationship to God, the Monroe Doctrine, peace with all people, free education, trained government per-

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sonnel, society's control of man, the purpose of government, and the federal idea. Many more ideas might be found within this brief statement.

I followed the rule of not adding a single word to anything that Jefferson wrote, but I took some liberty with his writings in that I eliminated unnecessary words and put sentences out of their original order in respect to time, place, and circumstance. No violence was done to Jefferson's thought and no violence was done to his expression. All the words were his, all the thoughts were his; every sentence was a complete thought and reflected the idea he intended it to convey. An example of the method I used in preparation of this unified statement can be found in the following: My statement, "Commerce between master and slave is despotism," was taken from the longer sentence, "The whole commerce between master and slaves is a perpetual affair of the most unremitting despotism on the one part and degrading frictions on the other."

The following condensed statement of Jeffersonian philosophy, then, is essentially a summary of all that will be found in this book. It is, in my opinion, the sum total of Americanism expressed in the words of the greatest defender of those things which make America.*

* This is not the form in which the inscriptions will appear on the Memorial, but merely my suggestions to the Commission.



MAN WAS DESTINED FOR SOCIETY. SOCIETY RESERVES TO EACH INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM CONSISTENT WITH PEACE AND ORDER.

ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS; AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED, DERIVING THEIR POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED. WHENEVER ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE OF THESE ENDS, IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO ALTER IT.



WHEN WE FIND OUR CONSTITUTION INSUFFICIENT TO SECURE THE HAPPINESS OF OUR PEOPLE, WE SET IT RIGHT.

THE PEOPLE ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THEIR LIBERTY.

GOD CREATED THE MIND FREE. NO MAN SHALL BE COMPELLED TO SUPPORT ANY RELIGIOUS MINISTRY NOR SUFFER ON ACCOUNT OF HIS BELIEFS. ALL MEN HAVE LIBERTY OF RELIGIOUS OPINION. THEIR MORALITY IS PART OF THEIR NATURE.

I KNOW BUT ONE CODE OF MORALITY FOR MEN WHETHER ACTING SINGLY OR COLLECTIVELY.



God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slaves is despotism. These people are to be free.

That people will be happiest whose laws are best. Those worthy by education without regard to wealth or birth should administer them.



EQUAL APPLICATION OF LAW IS FUNDAMENTAL. FEMALES HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS WITH MALES. TO PRESERVE FREEDOM CRUSADE AGAINST IGNORANCE; DIFFUSE KNOWLEDGE; FOLLOW TRUTH; EDUCATE THE PEOPLE AT THE COMMON EXPENSE. HEALTH AND MORALITY MUST NOT BE SACRIFICED TO LEARNING. PREVENT THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH IN SELECT FAMILIES.

MAKE OUR HEMISPHERE ONE OF FREEDOM. AN ATTACK ON ONE IS AN ATTACK ON THE WHOLE.

OUR WISEST POLICY IS PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL MANKIND.



1

The Nature of Man

THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS of a philosophy of life are a concept of man in relation to time and a concept of man in relation to his fellowmen. Theories about man's nature reflect all these possible relationships. If man thinks of himself as a unit which binds the present to the past and the past to the future, he may turn his philosophy into a religion. If he thinks of himself in his relations to his fellowmen or his state or society, he becomes Aristotle's *Anthropos politikos zoion*, "Man the political animal," and his philosophy becomes political theory.

As a political theorist, Thomas Jefferson was one of the world's great idealists. He was, likewise, a deeply religious man, though his contemporaries often and openly accused him of heresy and even of atheism. His idealism was the intellectual expression of a deep-seated love of liberty, a rebellion against all forms of oppression, and an unbounded faith in the moral soundness of his fellowmen. It is impossible to make any near approach to an understanding of Jefferson's lifelong struggle for freedom and democracy without some study of his basic philosophy. The life work of any man can be comprehended only in the light of his

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underlying concepts concerning the nature of man, the meaning of life and of society.

Sometimes it is a simple matter to discover the ideals which have prompted a great man to action, as in the case of the religious teacher or philosopher, who expounds more than he acts. But as the philosophy of the prophets must often be explained in terms of their living, so the living of the practical man must be explained in terms of his philosophy.

Unfortunately, Jefferson did not see fit to write for us any formal, systematic treatise on his conception of the nature of man or on his philosophy of government, as based on that concept. Yet he often revealed his ideas of man's place in society, and supported his practical political views by falling back on those fundamental convictions concerning the practical workings of democracy. These revealing glimpses are often hidden away in letters to his many friends and in his utterances on specific political problems. They breathe the spirit which motivated his lifelong work, which held him in the public service against every natural inclination, which kept him, who loved peace, in the broils of battle over a period of half a century. Had it not been for his deep-seated conviction of the righteousness of his cause and his faith in man's intrinsic goodness and his right to freedom, he never could have brought himself to continue in the struggle.

Democracy is based on the common man. It will work or it will not work, in theory, depending on what sort of being this common man is. He has been portrayed as everything from a mere beast, dominated by the animal instincts, to a child of God, "little lower than the angels." He has been pictured as a rabble, muddying the fountains of life from which the chosen would drink, and as the very voice of God Himself. He has been considered by Nietzsche as a

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slave, to be used by the master for his own glorification; and by the Chinese philosophers as a little child, to be nurtured with tender hands. Hobbes would have him governed by fear of the Leviathan; Confucius would enlighten him and govern him through superior wisdom and deserving confidence.

On one's concept of the nature of the common man, of the kind of being with whom we have to deal, must rest any comprehensive philosophy of government. In fact, every plan for group action must base itself on some concept of man's nature, of his natural abilities and tendencies, of his instinctive attitudes toward his fellowman. If we accept the idea that man is essentially a brute, preying on his neighbor, his only guiding instinct one of self-preservation, then he must be subdued and ruled by the same brute force which he would employ in dealing with others. He must be governed by fear, ruled by the iron fist, crushed and enslaved in order to make him harmless to the group in which he lives. Out of this philosophy come conclusions such as Hobbes upheld when he said, "For the Lawes of Nature . . . themselves, without the terroure of some Power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like. And Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all."¹ * Force thus becomes the only possible rule of action, the relations of men are solely those of master and slave, and oppression of the masses is socially desirable. The ruler, then, comes to regard any and every means necessary to control his subjects as legitimate. All respect for the common man disappears; he becomes a mere tool in the hand of the dictator. The ultimate in this concept was expressed by Nietzsche, when he said, "Human

* References are indicated in Notes, pp. 275 ff.

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society: It is an attempt—so I teach—a long seeking: it seeketh however the ruler!"² Under this theory society seems to exist solely for the purpose of producing a few great men out of the brutish mass.

On the other hand, if man is regarded as a being whose inborn social instincts lead him to co-operation and endow him with a natural sense of justice and ethical behavior—if man, in short, is good, rather than evil, by nature—then the individual is glorified and a government can be built upon him in which he may share in the creation of the conditions of his own happiness. All democracy must rest on such a theory of man.

Jefferson's beliefs regarding the nature of man must have been greatly influenced by his frontier surroundings. In the mountains of western Virginia the spirit of liberty and self-reliance flourished as naturally as the native plants. Faced with the dangers of the frontier, these hardy pioneers had to be self-reliant, yet they could not hope to survive without mutual dependence upon one another. Consequently there developed a respect for others, a hospitality, a profound interest in the success of others and a concern with the welfare of all, which had a great and lasting influence on Jefferson's concept of the nature of the individuals making up the society in which he lived. It is difficult, even in the light of much study and wider association, to eliminate from one's thinking the influence of such a background. The image of the man of western Virginia looms large in all of Jefferson's political thinking. This image is essential to an understanding of his love of liberty and his faith in the common man.

Jefferson was a Christian, in the sense that Christianity is the moral religion of the common man. While he may not have been impressed with the dogma of the religious groups about him, he expressly accepted the morality of

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Jesus, based on the equality of man and the majesty of the individual, as the best to be found in the world. He had faith that an all-wise Creator could not intend to place the fate of His children in the hands of some petty mortal tyrant. Jefferson was a Christian, too, in believing in the survival of the individual. It could never occur to him to try to get rid of the ills that surround the individual by eliminating the individual. To him man's problems were not part of his nature; they were obstacles for him to overcome, not by translation to some condition of bliss, but in earth's material struggles.

Combining his frontier experience with a deep faith in a just and wise Creator and an acceptance of the moral code of Jesus, Jefferson developed an unswerving faith in the ability of the common man to govern himself. This is the outstanding feature of his entire philosophy—this, and his insistence that there were certain God-given rights of which no man could justly be deprived. His lifelong struggle for human rights, his fight against all forms of oppression, was based on his deep-rooted convictions as to the nature of man.

"The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time."³ The desire for liberty was implanted by the Creator in all His children. It may have been crushed and practically eliminated from the hearts of many, yet it lay there, ready to burst forth at the first opportunity. For liberty is essential to the happiness of every enlightened individual. Jefferson would not have agreed with Milton when the latter said, "I confess there are but few, and those men of great wisdom and courage, that are either desirous of liberty, or capable of using it. The greatest part of the world choose to live under masters; but yet they would have them just ones."⁴ Despite the fact that Jefferson, as a western Virginian, had been brought up among Indians and Negro slaves, he was

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convinced that the Negro too was designed for freedom and would be happier when given his liberty.

Even Machiavelli had recognized in man an innate desire for freedom, but he would have crushed it, stamped it out completely, in order to make the rule of the Prince safe. Jefferson, on the contrary, would foster this desire, which was evidence of the Divine intent that man should be free. This instinct, so firmly fixed in every man, is as much a part of his nature as those instincts which seem more directly to bear on his self-preservation.

Jefferson could not separate the ideas of freedom and happiness. "The equal rights of man, and the happiness of every individual, are now acknowledged to be the only legitimate objects of government," he said.⁵ Again, "My future solicitude will be . . . to be instrumental to the happiness and freedom of all."⁶ This "solicitude," as we have seen, sprang from a truly religious conviction that no one had the right to take from any individual those natural liberties and rights which God had bestowed on him. "It is not only vain," he said, "but wicked, in a legislator to frame laws in opposition to the laws of nature, and to arm them with the terrors of death. This is truly creating crimes in order to punish them."⁷ The word "wicked" is quite significant, indicating as it does Jefferson's conviction that by offending the nature of man a government becomes immoral. In making an outline of the philosophy of Epicurus, Jefferson said, "Man is a free agent," and "Happiness [is] the aim of life."⁸

Not only can man claim certain natural rights, which cannot justly be taken from him, but he is also endowed with a social sense which makes it possible and natural for him to live successfully in close contact with his fellows.

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Not only is man endowed by nature with gregarious instincts, but also with an innate sense of justice. "God has formed us moral agents," he said. "Not that, in the perfection of His state, He can feel pain or pleasure in anything we may do; He is far above our power; but that we may promote the happiness of those with whom He has placed us in society, by acting honestly towards all, benevolently to those who fall within our way, respecting sacredly their rights, bodily and mental, and cherishing especially their freedom of conscience, as we value our own."⁹

In his political thinking Jefferson expressed very clearly the consequences of this concept of the natural rights of man. "We of the United States . . ." he said, "are constitutionally and conscientiously democrats. We consider society as one of the natural wants with which man has been created; that he has been endowed with faculties and qualities to effect its satisfaction by concurrence of others having the same want; that when, by the exercise of these faculties, he has procured a state of society, it is one of his acquisitions which he has a right to regulate and control, jointly indeed with all those who have concurred in the procurement, whom he cannot exclude from its use or direction more than they him."¹⁰ It can be seen from this why Jefferson so strongly objected to the ideas of Hobbes, as expressed in the statement cited above. Hobbes goes on to say, "Therefore notwithstanding the Lawes of Nature . . . if there be no Power erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will, and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art, for caution against all other men. And in all places, where men have lived by small Families, to robbe and spoyle one another, has been a Trade, and so farre from being reputed against the Law of Nature, that the greater spoils they gained, the greater was their honour; and men

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observed no other Lawes therein, but the Lawes of Honour; that is, to abstain from cruelty, leaving to men their lives, and instruments of husbandry. And as small Familyes did then; so now do Cities and Kingdomes which are but greater Families . . . enlarge their Dominions, upon all pretences of danger and fear of Invasion, or assistance that may be given to Invaders, endeavour as much as they can, to subdue, or weaken their neighbours, by open force, and secret arts, for want of other Caution, justly; and are remembered for it in after ages with honour.”¹¹

Jefferson’s answer to those who would separate morality from the state or the ruler was: if man cannot remain man without morals, how can the state, which is made up of men, or the ruler, who is also a man? For Jefferson believed, as the Chinese philosopher Mencius before him had taught, that man without morals is an earthworm. He believed, as Woodrow Wilson was later to teach, that we cannot have a government by law without state morality, and that without international morality we have international chaos and disorder.

Jefferson often expressed the idea that “the moral sense is as much a part of our constitution as that of feeling, seeing, or hearing; as a wise Creator must have seen to be necessary in an animal destined to live in society.”¹² This moral sense is one of the Creator’s greatest gifts to mankind. “I sincerely believe,” he said, “in the general existence of a moral instinct. I think it the brightest gem with which the human character is studded, and the want of it as more degrading than the most hideous of the bodily deformities.”¹³

Jefferson has argued at length his point of view in regard to the inborn social, or moral, instinct of man, which should, if properly developed, make him capable of self-government. “The Creator would, indeed, have been a bungling artist,

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had He intended man for a social animal, without planting in him social dispositions. It is true that they are not planted in every man, because there is no rule without exceptions; but it is false reasoning which converts exceptions into the general rule. Some men are born without the organs of sight, or of hearing, or without hands. Yet it would be wrong to say that man is born without these faculties, and sight, hearing, and hands may with truth enter into the general definition of man. The want or imperfection of the moral sense in some men, like the want or imperfection of the senses of sight and hearing in others, is no proof that it is a general characteristic of the species."¹⁴

The fact that all men did not regard the same acts as moral or immoral did not alter Jefferson's position in regard to the universal presence of this moral instinct. The observation that different peoples have different ethical standards has always required careful explanation by the exponents of the idea that man has been given the innate ability to know right from wrong. Jefferson's reasoning on this matter reveals to us his definition of morality: "Some have argued against the existence of a moral sense, by saying that if nature had given us such a sense, impelling us to virtuous actions, and warning us against those which are vicious, then nature would also have designated, by some particular earmarks, the two sets of actions which are, in themselves, the one virtuous and the other vicious. Whereas, we find, in fact, that the same actions are deemed virtuous in one country and vicious in another. The answer is that nature has constituted *utility* to man the standard and test of virtue. Man living in different countries, under different circumstances, different habits and regimens, may have different utilities; the same act, therefore, may be useful, and consequently virtuous in one country which is injurious and

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vicious in another differently circumstanced.”¹⁵ These, by the way, are not the words of a man who has derived his generalizations from the experiences of his neighbors in an isolated corner of the world. They are the thoughts of a mind free of the ordinary limitations of time and place.

So convinced was Jefferson that “nature has constituted utility to man the social test of virtue”¹⁶ that whenever there seemed to be a conflict between our “duties and interests,” we “ought to suspect some fallacy in our reasonings.”¹⁷ There can be little doubt, in the light of these statements, that Jefferson had full faith in the God-given ability of man to become a truly social being. In this man, upon whom the Creator had bestowed the desire for personal and intellectual liberty and a sense of social right and wrong, he saw the foundations upon which might be built a great democratic institution, created for the happiness of each individual of which it is composed. There could be no other legitimate purpose of government than that of securing the welfare and happiness of its component members.

Society has no purpose other than the protection of the individual and the insurance of his happiness. To Jefferson the thesis that the interests of the state came before those of the men who made it would have been incomprehensible; he could not conceive a happy or prosperous society in which the individual had lost his freedom or too greatly subordinated it to the so-called will of the group. Such a thing as a single-will state made up of happy individuals would have seemed to him a sheer impossibility. Happiness is a condition of the individual, not of the state, and without freedom there can be no happiness. To subordinate the individual to the supremacy of the state would nullify the very purpose for which the state is created. The majesty of the individual must not be forgotten. Economic security,

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military power, scientific progress—all such considerations are meaningless if built upon a foundation of men enslaved, even assuming they are in the long run possible under such a condition. For economic prosperity, military strength, and all the fancied security that go with these can have no real value to the individual who, in order to attain them, must relinquish those God-given rights of decision and freedom of action which are as sacred as life itself. Machiavelli might well say, "Wherefore, a wise Prince should devise means whereby his subjects may at all times, whether favourable or adverse, feel the need of the State and of him, and then they will always be faithful to him."¹⁸ But Jefferson would have insisted that a wise people should devise means whereby their rulers may at all times feel the need of the people and such rulers will, then, always be faithful to them.

It must not be supposed that Jefferson did not recognize great differences among the individuals who make up any society. But he did believe that the average man can be trusted, given proper environmental stimulus, to select the best and most able on whom to place the responsibility of government. He would agree completely with the Chinese sage who said, "Ah! ye multitudes of the myriad regions, listen clearly to the announcement of me, the one man. The great God has conferred even on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right. But to cause them tranquilly to pursue the course which it would indicate, is the work of the sovereign."¹⁹ Another quotation from Mencius might well be put in the mouth of Jefferson: "Heaven sees as my people see: Heaven hears as my people hear."²⁰ To him the voice of the people was certainly the voice of God.

It does not follow that, because he had faith in the common people, Jefferson would leave the actual work of gov-

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ernment in the hands of ordinary men. "There is," he says, "a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the aristoi. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction. There is, also, an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents: for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government? The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendancy."²¹ This natural aristocracy is scattered throughout society and is really a part of the great common mass of humanity. "Nature has wisely provided an aristocracy of virtue and talent for the direction of the interests of society, and scattered it with equal hand through all its conditions."²²

In his general philosophy concerning the nature of the individual components of society Jefferson would not differ from Mencius who was, perhaps, the first of the Chinese teachers to say that man is by nature good, that the tendency for man to do good is like that of water to flow downward. Jefferson disagreed definitely with Hobbes, as he himself plainly stated, when he said, "I gather from his [Destutt Tracy's] other works that he adopts the principle of Hobbes,

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that justice is founded in contract solely, and does not result from the construction of man. I believe, on the contrary, that it is instinct and innate, that the moral sense is as much a part of our constitution as that of feeling, seeing, or hearing; as a wise creator must have seen to be necessary in an animal destined to live in society; that every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another; that the non-existence of justice is not to be inferred from the fact that the same act is deemed virtuous and right in one society which is held vicious and wrong in another; because, as the circumstances and opinions of different societies vary, so the acts which may do them right or wrong must vary also; for virtue does not consist in the act we do, but in the end it is to effect. If it is to effect the happiness of him to whom it is directed, it is virtuous, while in a society under different circumstances and opinions, the same act might produce pain, and would be vicious. The essence of virtue is in doing good to others, while what is good may be one thing in one society, and its contrary in another.”²³ On another occasion, he objected with equal vigor to the general philosophy of Hobbes, when he wrote, “. . . I lament to see that he will adopt the principles of Hobbes, or humiliation to human nature; that the sense of justice and injustice is not derived from our natural organization, but founded on convention only. . . . Assuming the fact, that the earth has been created in time, and consequently the dogma of final causes, we yield, of course, to this short syllogism. Man was created for social intercourse; but social intercourse cannot be maintained without a sense of justice; then man must have been created with a sense of justice.”²⁴

Given the natural instinct of man to know justice and to be made happy by doing good to others, and given the universal desire for liberty, without which man cannot be

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happy, Jefferson had the foundation upon which to build a great governmental framework. It gave him "great confidence in the common sense of mankind in general,"²⁵ as he often said. It made the common man the cornerstone of his political philosophy. This glance into his fundamental philosophy offers the key to his entire public career. It explains his stand on every great question involving the principles of government. As James Truslow Adams has rightly said, "There were many cleavages, but from the standpoint of Americanism the most important was that between those who trusted the sense, honesty, and capacity of the people in the last resort, and those who did not; between those who believed the people could rule and those who believed that they must be ruled."²⁶ It was this faith in the ability of the people to govern, based as it was on a deep conviction that man is instinctively good, that supplied the living genius of the new American nation. Once again, we might well quote James Truslow Adams: "We have had in our history far fewer liberal leaders of ability than we have had reactionary ones. Liberalism has for the most part dwelt in the aspirations of the ordinary man, but the primary fount from which both he and his leaders have ever drawn their inspiration has been the words of Jefferson. Without Hamilton the new nation might have disintegrated. Without Jefferson it would have lost its soul and that faith which has made it different from others."²⁷

Jefferson's faith in the goodness of man, in his right to freedom of thought and action, and in his ability to work out for himself a solution of all the social and political problems which his environment presented was unshakable. This was his political religion. For this idea he was willing to sacrifice his all, friends, family association, wealth. Even in the light of the world situation today, were he alive to

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view it, he would not have despaired of the ultimate triumph of his ideal. There was far less chance in his day that the common man of the world should come to know and demand his rights, than there is today, even in the light of the apparent retreat from the ideals of democracy. As long as Jefferson's conception of the nature of man persists, his words will remain a challenge to the would-be dictator and to the theory of the single-will state. As long as there remain men inspired by the spirit of Jefferson, freedom cannot be stamped out by any earthly force.



2

The Religion of Thomas Jefferson

It is with fear and trembling that I approach the problem of the religion of Thomas Jefferson, realizing as I do that during his lifetime he so seldom saw fit to express publicly his convictions on this subject. I have no desire to probe into Jefferson's soul in an attempt to expose any secret which he would not have revealed himself, yet in our attempt to see this man in the full measure of his greatness and to understand him as a true world citizen, we can hardly afford not to examine his religious concepts.

There are obviously several reasons why Jefferson hesitated to discuss his religion freely and publicly. In the first place, he considered any man's faith a matter between himself and his God. No man should assume the right to pry into another's religious belief. The domain of religion was, for him, strictly private. He therefore made few attempts to explain his own beliefs or to learn those of others. On the contrary, he repeatedly told his friends that "it is known to my God and myself alone." When one of his biographers "inquired of me lately, with real affection too, whether he might consider as authentic, the change in my religion much spoken

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of in some circles," Jefferson commented that, "Now this supposed that they knew what had been my religion before, taking for it the word of their priests, whom I certainly never made the confidants of my creed." And he goes on to say, "Say nothing of my religion. It is known to my God and myself alone. Its evidence before the world is to be sought in my life; if that has been *honest and dutiful* to society, the religion which has regulated it cannot be a bad one."¹

Since this book deals primarily with political concepts, one might question the need of a consideration of religion at all. The justification in Jefferson's case is to be found in the statement just quoted. Jefferson evidently considered a man's religion to be a motive force behind his conduct and expressions, and we are interested in these aspects of Jefferson. But this statement also tells us that the value of a man's religion is to be gauged by the consequences in the conduct of his life. In other words the test of religion is made to be a matter of social responsibility and not a matter of revelation.

Wherever the influence of Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Christian, or Mohammedan thought has gone—and that means the entire West—the concept of a revealed morality has held sway. This concept has been the outstanding factor in the development of the high cultural standards of the West; but it has also on occasion—when, as a man of religion might say, it has been improperly used to fulfill some purpose other than one of righteousness—destroyed human rights and stultified culture. The world as a whole may, in a moral sense, be divided into two great spheres, each dominated by an opposing concept: on the one hand the concept of revelation; on the other, the concept of social responsibility. In the one, the accepted ideas of truth and

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morality are based on revelation, and they cannot be questioned because their origin is the infallible source of all truth. In the other, truth and right and wrong find their justification in the manner in which they work in society, either to the good or the injury of the group.

Within the sphere of revelation, life thus becomes an attempt to conform to an absolute. Right and wrong become matters of conformity, and conflicting standards cause wars between individuals and groups—those who would please God in different ways. This concept has made for martyrdom and refusal to compromise, for a condition of social and religious intolerance; for persecution, ostracism, inquisition, and excommunication for heresy.

In those lands where the judgment of society is recognized as determining right and wrong, there is a spirit of compromise, a type of tolerance which at least makes it possible for those who disagree on religion to live together or side by side. India presents a curious combination of the two moral spheres. Her scriptures tell us that the gods do not go about saying what is good and what is bad but that wise men of past ages, *seeing the results of men's conduct*, have found out and recorded what is good and what is bad. Nevertheless, India has set up other absolutes which have produced in her social life such inflexible social forms as her caste system. Yet she has not quarreled with her external neighbors or tried to force her social standards upon them.

China has been the freest place in all the world from the point of view of the various social inhibitions which man dominated by absolutes has everywhere accepted. Here men for ages have been free to marry whom they wished—or whom they bought—have eaten everything without restriction, worked when they wished, worn what they pleased, come and gone without being questioned or even numbered.

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When the literati have attempted to give some of the mandates of Confucius the sanction of revelation, they have failed because the people of China do not think in such terms. If asked why it is not right to kill, they would never answer, as we Westerners do, "We must not kill because God says, 'Thou shalt not kill!'" China justifies the prohibition against killing from a purely social standpoint, and this provides a basis for condemnation of murder upon which all the world can agree.

When Jefferson tests his religion by a similar universal standard, he stamps himself as a citizen of a broader world than that dominated entirely by our Western concept of revelation. We feel, however, as we become acquainted with Jefferson, that he was not quite sure that his associates would fully understand his point of view on religion. He was certain that many of them would not have been sympathetic toward his attitude. This doubt is evident when he says, "I not only write nothing on religion, but rarely permit myself to speak on it, and never but in a reasonable society."² That is a most significant statement. Jefferson had no yearning to express himself on religious topics for the mere purpose of that expression; he had no desire to startle his friends by his unorthodoxy; he evidenced none of the spirit of the reformer in this field; he may have wished to be understood, but doubted the ability of his associates to understand him fully. He was definitely conscious of the fact that he belonged to a different world of religious and spiritual thought from the majority of his neighbors.

Aside from these evident reasons for Jefferson's refusal to discuss his religious views openly, there seems to be yet another which must constantly have presented itself to him. Jefferson was nothing if not a public figure. There can be no doubt that had his religious views been expressed, they

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would not have met with the favor of the orthodox Christian of Jefferson's time. For a man in public life deliberately and unnecessarily to lay himself open to constant criticism, of which there proved to be far too much as it was, because of his openly avowed lack of conformity, would have been an unwarranted invitation to trouble. His fight for religious freedom in Virginia had brought upon him the universal disapproval of the clergy of the established church, many of whom were not too careful in their interpretation of the reasons dictating his struggle for religious freedom. Throughout his entire life, Jefferson was engaged in the discussion of controversial issues, questions upon which men took sides most vigorously. He was certain to make many enemies, who attacked him on every possible ground. He knew that it would be unwise, to say the least, to add ammunition of a religious nature for his enemies to employ against him.

His statement to Dr. Benjamin Rush, written while he was serving his first term as President, justifies this conclusion. "And in confiding it to you, I know it will not be exposed to the malignant perversions of those who make every word from me a text for new misrepresentations and calumnies. I am moreover averse to the communication of my religious tenets to the public; because it would countenance the presumption of those who have endeavoured to draw them before that tribunal, and to seduce public opinion to erect itself into that inquisition over the rights of conscience, which the laws have so justly proscribed. It behoves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself, to resist invasions of it in the case of others; or their case may, by change of circumstance, become his own."⁸

Not that Jefferson was in any way indifferent to the importance of religion or to its interest as a subject for

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study. His writings show that he was far from uninformed on the subject. One given to constant study and thought, as was Jefferson, could not have passed through the period in which he lived without being deeply interested in the current theological problems. He was, too, a philosopher at heart. Indeed, it must have been with some difficulty that he refrained from expressing himself on this subject more often. The relatively few references to religion which are to be found in his writings, especially those written during the late days of his life, indicate profound thought on this subject. There is no evidence of a detailed knowledge of the great world religions. But the fact that his viewpoint was not circumscribed by the religious concepts of the prevailing groups about him indicates that his religious reading was in no wise restricted to the Christian literature of the colonies.

In these views Jefferson was, of course, not alone. He shares them with many other leading men of his day. Ernest Sutherland Bates classes him with Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Ethan Allen, Washington, Hamilton, and Madison, and indicates that the thinking of these men was typical of much that emanated from Harvard and from William and Mary. Here, as in many other respects, Jefferson was not so different from his learned contemporaries, but was more courageous than many in standing firmly for what he believed.

The political philosophy of all these leaders of the American Revolution, the theory of natural rights, was an outgrowth of eighteenth-century deism, according to which nature was the expression of divine reason. Since God could not be a bungler in creating society, He must have placed in it those elements which could insure its proper functioning.

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Man's innate desire for liberty was natural, and God must have instilled that desire in him for a purpose and planned that it be not crushed. Natural rights are those individual capacities, like life and liberty, which can be expressed independently of society, and which must be maintained by society. To maintain that certain rights were the direct gift of God, that "The same God who gave us life also gave us liberty," lent to these political views a religious sanction which attracted many to their support.

It was not a difficult step to carry the idea of natural rights from the individual over into the group. Thomas Paine did just that. The colonies had the right to decide their own political future, as soon as they were strong enough to protect themselves in their association with other political groups. Here is a simple extension of the American cult of freedom of the individual. The very essence of this cult was a hatred of oppression. Every individual and every group must be free to act for itself in so far as such action does not interfere with the freedom of others. Later, again, the acceptance of the Constitution could be urged on the ground that it was, in a sense, an inspired document and the government set up under it an expression of the divine will. This religious zeal for the new government did much to stabilize it and insure its success.

It is in this sense that liberty may be said to be the religion of Thomas Jefferson. It is not easy to say that Jefferson's ideas of liberty stemmed from his religious concepts, nor can we assume that his religion was the product of his political thinking. They grew together, out of the deism of the time and the individualism of the Virginia frontier, together with many other influences coming from his wide reading and study and from the antecedents of eighteenth-century deism,

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with which Jefferson was no doubt well acquainted.* His was a religious-political philosophy typical of his time and place.

It is impossible to understand fully the conduct of any man without having some idea of his religion, the greatest moving force in the lives of most men. And Jefferson's ideas on democracy were inseparably bound up with his religion. With him natural freedom, moral freedom, and political freedom all went hand in hand and irresistibly followed upon one another. It was impossible for him not to apply the same reasoning to one of these as to another. These rights could not be denied the individual nor could they be taken from the political group. In this manner Jefferson's religious concepts infuse his political ideas, and no line can be drawn between his religion and his political philosophy. And both, as we have seen, seem to have their origin in nature, closer to earth than heaven.

As I have already said, Jefferson did not flaunt his religious philosophy before the public, yet in his later life he expressed his basic views rather more freely. He did not expect, we gather, to find in any scripture the revealed word, the infallible guide and answer to all the problems of the universe. While he held the Christian Scripture in deep respect, he would read it "as you would read Livy or Tacitus."⁴ His attitude toward the New Testament, while it offended many of his contemporaries, is not unfamiliar today. "In the New

* The writings of Mencius, to whom I have already referred a few times, and of other classic Chinese social and political thinkers, found their way into Europe through translations as early as the thirteenth century. The merits and defects of the fundamental philosophical thought of the Far East were well aired, especially at the Vatican, because of the great controversy between the Jesuits and the Franciscans in China. Jefferson may therefore have had some knowledge of Eastern thought, though there is no proof of this.

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Testament," he says, "there is internal evidence that parts of it have proceeded from an extraordinary man; and that other parts are of the fabric of very inferior minds. It is as easy to separate those parts, as to pick out diamonds from dunghills."⁵ In amplification of this same idea he wrote, "To do him [Jesus] justice, it would be necessary to remark the disadvantages his doctrines had to encounter, not having been committed to writing by himself, but by the most unlettered of men, by memory, long after they had heard them from him; when much was forgotten, much misunderstood, and presented in every paradoxical shape."⁶

This attitude toward the Christian Scriptures was certain to have caused much criticism among the theologically inclined, and such criticism must have been, in part at least, responsible for the antagonism toward the clergy that is evident in every reference Jefferson makes to them. Many of the most bitter statements to be found in his writings are aimed at the clergy. He thought that the emphasis which was placed on dogma was designed "to interest our minds in the support of the teachers who inculcate them." "Hence," he says, "for one sermon on a moral subject, you hear ten on the dogmas of the sect."⁷ He thought of the priest as a friend of despotism and an enemy to liberty.⁸ In a bitter denunciation of the clergy of New England, he says, "The sway of the clergy in New England is indeed formidable. No mind beyond mediocrity dares there to develop itself. If it does, they excite against it the public opinion which they command, and by little, but incessant and tearing persecutions, drive it from among them. Their present emigrations to the Western country are real flights from persecution, religious and political, but the abandonment of the country by these who wish to enjoy freedom of opinion leaves the despotism over the residue more intense, more oppressive."⁹

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With this attitude toward the Scriptures and the clergy, it is only natural that Jefferson should approach the matter of religion with much the same spirit that he would examine other subjects he considered of importance. Perhaps his approach is best shown in a letter to his nephew, Peter Carr, to whom he addressed some of his most worthy statements on religious and moral subjects. "Your reason is now mature enough to examine this object. In the first place, divest yourself of all bias in favor of novelty and singularity of opinion. Indulge them in any other subject rather than that of religion. It is too important, and the consequences of error may be too serious. On the other hand, shake off all the fears and servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear. . . . Read the Bible, then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but uprightness of the decision."¹⁰

In another significant paragraph, found in a letter to Elbridge Gerry, Jefferson indicates the struggle which prevailed between two approaches to the problems of the world. "I am," he says, "for the encouraging the progress of science in all its branches; and not for raising a hue and cry against the sacred name of philosophy; for awing the human mind by stories of raw-head and bloody bones to a distrust of its own vision, and to repose implicitly on that of others; to go backward instead of forward to look for improvement; to believe that government, religion, morality, and every other science were in the highest perfection in the ages of the darkest ignorance, and that nothing can ever be devised

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more perfect than what was established by our forefathers.”¹¹ If we had no other statement from the pen of Jefferson, this one paragraph would mark him as a great progressive thinker, looking into the future for the fulfillment of his dreams.

Jefferson’s attitude toward the Bible has brought forth much criticism. It is not for us either to condemn or to uphold him in this point of view, yet it may be worthy of remark that his critics are often even less charitable toward him than he was toward those who disagreed with him. They who called him “infidel” were more given to raillery than to argument. Although he spoke plainly and vigorously on this subject, which method of expression was characteristic of him, he professed himself to be no more certain of his point of view than were his critics. It is also only fair to say that, right or wrong, Jefferson would find himself much less alone today in his views on the Bible than he was during the active days of his life.

Despite his evident skepticism in regard to the theological aspect of religion, Jefferson was, as we have seen, deeply interested in morality. Abandoning all hope of finding the answer to the many questions of dogma on which the churches of his day differed, he limited his reading on religion to moral aspects, wherein he was convinced that all religions were essentially alike. Thus, his religion came to take on the form of an ethical code, based, however, on a belief that the essential morality had back of it an eternally unchanging basis. Jefferson thus discovers a sort of universal morality in man. Man’s morality is part of his nature. Here we have an approach to the Christian concept of a light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”¹² His final deductions seem to be the result of reasoning from what he considered sound experience. His final

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acceptance of the notion of a universal morality based on eternally unchanging principles reminds us of the similar deductions of the Procurators in the early development of Roman *jus gentium*, wherein the laws of the various foreign *gens* were found to be so much alike that the *jus gentium* (law of nations) was soon confused with *lex naturale* (natural law.) So, it appears, we must consider Jefferson as a moralist; it would be a mistake to expect a great deal of light on his theology.

Jefferson, then, appears to have rebelled against what he considered the bigotry and intolerance of his day. He readily understood and accepted Christian morality and the concept of a purposeful universe under the direction of an all-wise Deity; yet he was not interested in dogma, in what he considered to be meaningless arguments over what must be accepted on faith by the believer. A liberal in his day, he would cause little stir among scholars of the present; much less would he be termed an atheist or a heretic.

It is true that he was not one of those intense souls who can never rest until they find the ultimate truth, and therefore never rest. He worried very little about his neighbors' beliefs, which he could not accept, so long as he was not asked to believe the same. To him there was no heresy. He thought that every man should be left to believe what his knowledge and experience taught him. Yet even a superficial glance at his utterances reveals the fact that he was not an atheist, as he was often designated. His letters, on which we must chiefly depend for our knowledge of his religion, abound in references to the Deity. Whenever he approaches a discussion of morality or of the natural rights of man, he invariably falls back on his belief in the existence of a purposeful Deity, with Whose handiwork he had to deal. When he did take note of the accusation against him, he denied

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categorically that he could ever be an atheist. It seems strange that one who could pen these words in the early period of his life (1779) should ever have been so stigmatized: "Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested His supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint. . . . All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who, being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to exalt it by its influence on reason alone."¹³

Jefferson considered the great purpose of the work of Jesus to be to bring to the Jews "the principles of pure deism, and juster notions of the attributes of God, to reform their moral doctrines to the standard of reason, justice and philanthropy, and to inculcate the belief of a future state."¹⁴

Jefferson's God was definitely the Author of a universe in which justice must ultimately prevail, as indicated by his comment about Bonaparte that, had he "reflected that such is the moral construction of the world, that no national crime passes unpunished in the long run, he would not now be in the cage of St. Helena."¹⁵ He expressed the same thought in regard to the condition of the slaves in the colonies. "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible

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events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest.”¹⁸ These are hardly the words of an atheist, but rather of one whose faith in the justice of the Supreme Being leaves little to be desired.

There is much inferential evidence that Jefferson believed in the immortality of the soul and there is at least one statement in which he sets forth his faith in the hereafter in these words: “The term is not very distant, at which we are to deposit in the same cerement, our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved and lost, and whom we shall still love and never lose again.”¹⁷ Several times he referred to the satisfaction with which he expected to look down on the results of the work of those who had been instrumental in setting up a democracy among a free people.

One other idea which might be classed as theological is worthy of brief mention. Jefferson rather minimized the importance of belief as a saving virtue, and instead elevated living to the peak of importance. It is difficult to find anywhere in the realm of religious literature a better statement of that idea than is found in Jefferson’s own words. “If I be marching on with my utmost vigor in that way which according to the sacred geography leads to Jerusalem straight, why am I beaten and ill used by others because my hair is not of the right cut; because I have not been dressed right; because I eat flesh on the road; because I avoid certain byways which seem to lead into briars; because among several paths I take that which seems shortest and cleanest; because I avoid travellers less grave and keep company with others who are more sour and austere; or because I follow a guide crowned with a mitre and clothed in white? Yet these are the frivolous things which keep Christians at war.”¹⁸

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Yet another statement is worthy of quotation, for it stamps Jefferson as a man of world-wide sympathies, a world citizen. "I believe," he said, "with the Quaker preacher, that he who steadily observes those moral precepts in which all religions concur, will never be questioned at the gates of heaven, as to the dogmas in which they all differ. That on entering there, all these are left behind us, and the Aristides and Catos, the Penns and Tillotsons, Presbyterians and Baptists, will find themselves united in all principles which are in concert with the reason of the supreme mind. Of all the systems of morality, ancient or modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus. He who follows this steadily need not, I think, be uneasy, although he cannot comprehend the subtleties and mysteries erected on his doctrines by those who, calling themselves his special followers and favorites, would make him come into the world to lay snares for all understandings but theirs."¹⁹

Jefferson's complete liberality in religious matters was well demonstrated when he suggested that "the different religious sects . . . establish, each for itself, a professorship of their own tenets, on the confines of the university [of Virginia], so near as that their students may attend the lectures there, and have the free use of our library, and every other accommodation we can give them; preserving, however, their independence of us and of each other."²⁰ He even saw in such an establishment the opportunity to bring about what to him would be a very desirable result. He expressed the hope that "by bringing the sects together, and mixing them with the mass of other students, we shall soften their asperities, liberalize and neutralize their prejudices, and make the general religion a religion of peace, reason, and morality."²¹

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In the strongest terms possible, he often expressed his complete tolerance in religion. "I never will, by any word or act, bow to the shrine of intolerance, or admit a right of inquiry into the religious opinions of others. On the contrary, we are bound, you, I, and every one, to make common cause, even with error itself, to maintain the common right of freedom of conscience. We ought with one heart and one hand to hew down the daring and dangerous efforts of those who would seduce the public opinion to substitute itself into that tyranny over religious faith which the laws have so justly abdicated."²²

It is one thing to tolerate religious freedom, quite another to fight for it. It is the difference between the Roman Empire and young America, of which Jefferson was typical. None but a religious man could so prize the right of freedom of worship. Jefferson was the very embodiment of the struggle for complete religious freedom, freedom as far as the state was concerned, and freedom, if such a thing be possible, from social pressures.

Along with his very simple theology, which could be summed up as faith in a purposeful universe and in some kind of immortality, Jefferson developed an equally simple morality. Virtue consisted in doing good to others, or in doing what one hoped would make his fellowman happy. Jefferson's conclusions on virtue were briefly summed up in a letter to John Adams, written ten years before his death: "Virtue does not consist in the act we do, but in the end it is to effect. If it is to effect the happiness of him to whom it is directed, it is virtuous, while in a society under different circumstances and opinions, the same act might produce pain, and would be vicious. The essence of virtue is in doing good to others, while what is good may be one thing in one society, and its contrary in another."²³

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As has been indicated in the previous chapter of this book, Jefferson believed that morality was natural to man, that if man but followed his better instincts, he would not act contrary to true morality. He even carried this idea over into his thinking on international relations, as evidenced by his statement, "We are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations, as with individuals, our interests soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our moral duties; and history bears witness to the fact, that a just nation is taken on its word, when recourse is had to armaments and wars to bridle others."²⁴ Jefferson never faltered in his contention that "Moral duties are as obligatory on nations as on individuals."²⁵ He says, "I have but one system of ethics for men and for nations,—to be grateful, to be faithful to all engagements and under all circumstances, to be open and generous, promoting in the long run even the interests of both; and I am sure it promotes their happiness."²⁶ Here was a statesman who really believed in international morality. He made no distinction between morality for the statesman and for the common citizen. "The man who is dishonest as a statesman would be a dishonest man in any station. It is strangely absurd to suppose that a million of human beings, collected together, are not under the same moral laws which bind each of them separately."²⁷ How far from these moral precepts have the statesmen of today gone astray!

If there were need of further evidence that Jefferson was a deeply religious man, the time and energy which he expended in the preparation of his little volume, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, should dispel all doubt on the matter. He said, himself, that this compilation "is a document in proof that I am a *real Christian*, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."²⁸ Examination of this

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book, recently published in popular form, reveals even better than his other written statements, his true viewpoint toward Christianity. Here is an attempt to put together the authentic events in the life of Jesus and those sayings which Jefferson could accept as having been spoken by the Master.

In this compilation all reference to theology, to the Sonship of Jesus, to the Virgin Birth, to the resurrection, to the expected Messianic return—in fact, to everything of a supernatural nature—is absent. The effect of this treatment is to make this life of Jesus a book of universal appeal. No theological controversy can grow out of this book. It contains nothing which cannot be accepted by everyone who will agree with the Christian morality. In making this compilation Jefferson again demonstrated his capacity to think in universals. His scrupulous avoidance of all reference to controversial theological matters shows his appreciation of the fact that the morals of Jesus were for Jew and Gentile, Christian and Pagan. It represents, no doubt, one of Jefferson's contributions as a world citizen.

Jefferson would have accepted, and did accept, the religious and moral precepts which are common to all the great religions. He wished to make those doctrines on which all agreed the cornerstone of his religious structure. He was willing to place in the background those controversial issues which make up the detail of the competing theologies of the world. Those ideas on which we “schismatize” seemed to him to be of little importance.

One statement on this subject expresses his attitude with extreme clarity. “Reading, reflection and time have convinced me that the interests of society require the observation of those moral precepts only in which all religions agree (for all forbid us to steal, murder, plunder, or bear false witness), and that we should not intermeddle with the par-

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ticular dogmas in which all religions differ, and which are totally unconnected with morality. In all of them we see good men, and as many in one as another. The varieties in the structure and action of the human mind as in those of the body, are the work of our Creator, against which it cannot be a religious duty to erect the standard of uniformity. The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, he has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. We all agree in the obligation of the moral precepts of Jesus, and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses. It is, then, a matter of principle with me to avoid disturbing the tranquillity of others by the expression of any opinion on the innocent questions on which we schismatize.”²⁹

Even in the face of such evidence, some have accused Jefferson of intolerance. It is true that some of his pronouncements about religion seem to carry some bitterness, but when we consider the tone of the attacks that were often leveled at him, it is not surprising that he sometimes responded in kind. He displayed little patience with what he considered blind superstition and less with what appeared to be conscious deception on the part of religious leaders.

It was equally important to him that the mind of man be freed from the bonds of superstition and religious ignorance as it was that man be left to worship as he pleased or to worship not at all. It would, perhaps, be expecting too much of the human mind to ask it to remain entirely free of bias under the circumstances in which Jefferson found himself.

To the accusation that “He was a deist, an infidel, agnostic and materialist,”³⁰ Jefferson would have answered simply, “And what sort of person has this made of me?” His religion was important as it worked in the daily lives of men. He

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could find no fault with the religion of any good member of society, in America or in any other part of the world. Whether we agree with him or not, we must all admit that in religion he stood for the same fundamentals for which he stood politically: for the right of every man to freedom of belief and the right to "work out his salvation" in his own way.

I have not attempted to pass on the merits of Jefferson's religious concepts. This is one field in which judgment is not likely to be sound. To illustrate this point, I am tempted to relate here an incident:

We were caught in a very heavy fog up the Yangtze River, not far from Hankow. Our boat was a small river vessel; and the passengers were few but extremely varied, so many different types being represented that the fact invited experiment. I was reading a book on China which contained the statement that the Chinese are the most moral people on earth. My companions were a Senior Methodist Bishop of China, a splendid American gentleman who reflected his position perfectly; a British Consul, who had seen years of service in China and the East; a Dutch Professor, who spent his time in his stateroom reading, and writing about the life of the people he was passing among, but which he consistently failed to notice or observe. I thought I would try the sentence, "The Chinese are the most moral people on earth," on my friends and get their reactions. First, I went to the Professor. He said, "Certainly. The Chinese remain true to their code of conduct and if you understand it, you can rely on them to act in accordance with it." Next, to the Consul, who said, "The Chinese are not moral or unmoral—they are just the same as the British or Americans. You find many moral Chinese and many unmoral ones. There is no such thing as a moral nation or people. They are good, bad,

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and indifferent, just as we are." Then, the Bishop: "Moral? I should say not! There is no such thing as a moral Chinese. They are all polygamists or they all want to be polygamists. Morals are not part of a Chinaman's make-up." When I told the Professor what the Bishop had said, he shouted, "Polygamists! Polygamists! What has that to do with morality?" So I abandoned my vain attempt to find a common ground for discussion.



3

Education and Democracy

DURING HIS ENTIRE public career and long after his retirement to private life, Jefferson gave much thought and serious study to the part education was to play in the success of the newly formed American Republic. No subject was more dear to him, and he returned to its consideration whenever the responsibilities of public office could be momentarily set aside. He himself placed the founding of the University of Virginia side by side with the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the authorship of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom as one of his three greatest accomplishments. To be known as the father of the University was one of his fondest desires.

But the founding of the University was but a partial consummation of a much broader and more significant program of education which he planned and for which he worked. The University was but the capstone of a structure, the foundation of which was never so much as laid during Jefferson's lifetime. While he was proud of this superstructure, he regretted to his dying day the fact that the foundation was not what he had planned.

I do not here intend to discuss the details of Jefferson's

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plan for educating the people of Virginia. Such a study has been undertaken by many scholars in the field of educational administration, and it has well rewarded them; for Jefferson left a most detailed account of his proposed plans, including the departments which he hoped to establish in the University and the subjects to be included in each of the departments. We are far more interested in the underlying principles which prompted Jefferson's enthusiasm for education and the effect he expected it to exert on the people and institutions of the country. A student of government, passionately dedicated to the cause of democracy, he could never completely separate education from government. With the fullest faith in the ability of man to govern himself, he nonetheless realized that the responsibility of self-government could be assumed successfully only by an enlightened people. The very freedoms for which the Colonies had sacrificed so much would be unsafe in the hands of any but an educated society.

While this is not designed to be a detailed discussion of Jefferson's scheme of education, a brief review of what he proposed is necessary to a proper understanding of the place of education in his scheme of popular government. There is no better way of seeing this plan in its entirety than to let Jefferson himself explain it, as he did in his *Notes on Virginia*: "The bill proposes to lay off every county into small districts of five or six miles square, called hundreds, and in each of them to establish a school for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. The tutor to be supported by the hundred, and every person in it entitled to send their children three years gratis, and as much longer as they please, paying for it. These schools to be under a visitor who is annually to choose the boy of best genius in the school, of those whose parents are too poor to give them further educa-

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tion, and to send him forward to one of the grammar schools, of which twenty are proposed to be erected in different parts of the country, for teaching Greek, Latin, geography, and the higher branches of numerical arithmetic. Of the boys thus sent in any one year, trial is to be made at the grammar schools one or two years, and the best genius of the whole selected, and continued six years, and the residue dismissed. By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, and be instructed at the public expense, so far as the grammar schools go. At the end of six years instruction, one-half are to be discontinued (from among whom the grammar schools will probably be supplied with future masters); and the other half, who are to be chosen for the superiority of their parts and disposition, are to be sent and continued three years in the study of such sciences as they shall choose, at William and Mary College. . . . The ultimate result of the whole scheme of education would be the teaching all the children of the State reading, writing, and common arithmetic; turning out ten annually of superior genius, well taught in Greek, Latin, geography, and the other higher branches of arithmetic; turning out ten others annually, of still superior parts, who, to those branches of learning, shall have added such branches of the sciences as their genius shall have led them to; the further furnishing to the wealthier part of the people convenient schools at which their children may be educated at their own expense.”¹

Two things stand out as of fundamental importance in Jefferson’s proposed educational scheme: the desire to educate every person in the state at the public expense; and the plan to select the best minds for advanced training. We must not overlook the fact, of course, that the plan made it possible for all who desired, and were able to pay for such priv-

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lege, to pursue their education as far as their own talents made possible. The state, however, assumed responsibility for the education of all its citizens up to a certain level and of a limited number even to the college level.

Much as we now take it for granted that it is the duty of the state to educate the citizen, we must remember that no such idea had taken hold on the public mind in Jefferson's day. The idea of free education—not to mention the idea of compulsory education to which we are so accustomed—was revolutionary. Hirst says, "In associating manhood suffrage with popular education Jefferson was in the vanguard of philosophic radicalism."² It was exactly this revolutionary idea of universal manhood suffrage that made necessary the accompanying idea of universal education. The citizens took upon themselves the responsibility of self-government. Such an undertaking could never be successful if the people were left in a condition of ignorance, unable to inform themselves upon the questions of public policy which they would be called upon to decide.

If the reader will forgive me for referring once again to Eastern philosophy, I should like to call his attention to the curious fact that this educational system of Jefferson was essentially the same in principle as that advocated by Confucius.* The Confucian plan for universal education was realized in a system which provided a village school for the families of every hamlet; the *hsiang* for the neighborhood; the *hsu* for the larger districts; and the colleges for the capitals. It was through these schools that the pupils started the training which would lead them by means of competitive examinations to positions of the "superior man." Aside from their remarkable similarity in general plan of organiza-

* I have discussed the Confucian educational system in my *Chinese Political Thought*.

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tion, which would carry learning to the entire population, these two systems are also alike in the manner in which the individuals with what Jefferson called better "genius" are selected for the more advanced phases of education. As Confucius said, "To those whose talents are above mediocrity, the highest subjects may be announced." "To those who are below mediocrity, the highest subjects may not be announced."³ Under each of these systems the "superior man" was trained primarily for service as a leader in the state. Under the Chinese system, only those thus qualified could hope to attain leadership, because only those so trained were able to pass the civil service examinations. Under the Jeffersonian system it was assumed that the citizens would inevitably select such persons to office, or that these persons would, under the auspices of a free society, naturally rise to the leadership to which their training would entitle them.

In a consideration of the universal aspects of Jefferson's philosophy and of his place as a world citizen, comparison of his theories with those of the early Chinese are very much in order, for these two systems offer much that is alike both in letter and in desired results. Strange as it may seem, America and China have each independently developed similar concepts of universal significance regarding human nature, and nowhere else in the world, perhaps, can we find political philosophies so firmly fixed in the fundamentals of human nature. The entire Chinese system was based on a natural philosophy, on a theory of man in tune with nature; the Jeffersonian system is based on the satisfaction of the natural desires of man; it is an attempt to make him once more a natural man, after he has been led astray by unnatural political and social institutions. The Chinese system has furnished equality of opportunity for all who wished to prepare for public service, has rewarded merit, and has made

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impossible any aristocracy based on birth or blood. For generations it has permitted every boy, no matter how lowly his circumstances—unless he came from the barbers or the boat people, and was therefore a wanderer—to aspire to the highest positions in the state. Moreover, the idea that property should descend only to certain predesignated members of the family (primogeniture) would seem incongruous to the Chinese. There was no such thing as an illegitimate child; no one of the children had privileges above the others; adoption was employed to preserve the family economy; there was “marrying in” and “marrying out,” all designed to accomplish the same end.

All these mighty elemental institutions of a sound political and economic classless democracy are to be found in ancient China. And Chinese life has remained essentially democratic, regardless of the form of government. Indeed, it is this fundamental democracy that has made for the remarkable stability of Chinese civilization. When Pearl Buck, some years ago, spoke before the Cosmos Club of Washington, she was asked why it was that Americans always seemed to sympathize with the Chinese when China was in trouble. Her answer was that it was because Chinese and Americans were alike in so many ways. In no way are they more alike than in their concepts of education as set forth by Confucius and Jefferson.

We read in the *Hisio Ki*, “The jade uncut will not form a vessel for use; and if men do not learn, they do not know the way in which they should go. On this account the ancient kings, when establishing states and governing the people, made instruction and schools a primary object;—as it is said in the charge to Yueh, ‘The thoughts from the first to last should be fixed on learning.’ ”⁴

This admonition is again set forth in the famous Chinese

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Three-Character Classic, the first lesson given the young Chinese student. It is written for him in simple sentences of three characters each, and runs something like this: The Mother of Mencius, in order that her son might be reared in proper surroundings, moved into a new neighborhood, but even then young Mencius would not study. To make him understand the seriousness of his slothful ways, his mother broke her loom, thus destroying her only means of livelihood. The jade contains the nature of goodness in the rough, but it is only through polishing that it becomes useful and of great worth.

In this brief classic is to be found the essence of Jefferson's conception of the role of education: man is inherently good, but he must be enlightened in order to bring that goodness into useful operation.

There is, however, one contrast between the Confucian and the Jeffersonian systems which should be pointed out. It has to do with the forms which these similar ideas eventually took on in their historic development. The writings of the ancient Chinese were preserved and handed down to us largely by the scholars, whose livelihood was made secure by the perpetuation of their monopoly in a government by the "learned." But the latter term soon became so restricted in its meaning that education became merely the mastering of a series of rules and regulations for conduct, instead of a search for new knowledge. The result was to create an educated group so self-satisfied that it was entirely backward-looking.

There is a familiar historical incident that illustrates this point and justifies its relation here. One of the viceroys representing the Chinese throne at Canton during the Opium War was well liked by the British victors. They knew that the Emperor would punish Ki for his failure in his struggle

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against the British. They were also familiar with the custom of the Chinese Emperor of sending to any minister who had failed in his task, a yellow cord with which it was the duty of the incompetent minister to hang himself. Ki was a worthy man, and, in order to save him from his certain fate, the British captured him and carried him to safety in Bombay. Ki never thanked them for this protection. They could not understand his apparent indifference toward this act of kindness or toward the new world about him. When they, at last, asked if he did not feel grateful for their protection and for the opportunity he had received to see so much of the world, he answered that once one had the "Classics put away in one's belly" (the seat of knowledge among the Chinese, as among the Greeks) there was nothing left to learn and therefore nothing worth seeing.

Such an attitude toward learning is fundamentally opposed to that of Jefferson. He placed no limit on knowledge. He could never have presumed that he was writing a volume or selecting any body of learning that "would hold the people for two thousand years," as Confucius is credited with having said of one of his books. Jefferson accepted the theory of progress. He anticipated, expected, and hoped for growth and change. While, therefore, their theories in regard to schools and the purpose which they serve were in many ways the same, the ultimate results expected were as far apart as were Confucius and Jefferson in time.

The Chinese shared the early Hebrew theory of training "up a child in the way he should go." Both were designed to fit the child into a groove already prepared for him. A given standard had been established and must be maintained by everyone. Jefferson, on the other hand, assumed that, as those trained moved upward from one grade to the next, competition would result in a progressive raising of stand-

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ards. Though Jefferson's educational notions, when he advanced them, were purely theoretical, and his object in proposing them was to help make democracy work in a world dominated by ideas of class privilege and the aristocracy of birth and blood, the consequences of his theory of progress are evident in the continued reaching out into new fields of knowledge, as manifested in our great modern universities. The Chinese, though they put the plans of their sages into effect, and though they already enjoyed certain favorable conditions conducive to democracy, were not as happy in the results of their educational system. This was because they lacked the idea of progress. They were bound, instead, by the concept of the cycle. Like the Greeks, they considered change only to be a constant return to an old condition and level. In such systems there was not the same incentive for advancement as was supplied by the Jeffersonian program for the search for unbounded knowledge.

Education, Jefferson felt certain, was the only sure foundation for a sound democracy. A despotic government could hold its citizenry in line and deprive the people of their liberties only while they were ignorant. Universal education would raise "the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government."⁵ Jefferson had little doubt as to which was the better of these two alternatives. "And say, finally," he says, "whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government, or information to the people. This last is the most certain, and the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our

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liberty.”⁶ On the same subject he says again, “Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositaries. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary.”⁷ The people must be informed, if democratic government is to work. “No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness. . . . Preach a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against the evils [of misgovernment].”⁸ Here is Jefferson’s doctrine of universal education, with his own full justification for it. In a much briefer statement, he sums up all his philosophy of the relation of education and free government, when he says, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”⁹ It is easy to understand Jefferson’s interest in education when we realize that he considered it the necessary companion of that which he prized above all else, freedom.

So frequent are Jefferson’s references to this subject, which he regarded as so vital, that, even at the risk of repetition, we may well record here a few more of the gems which he has left us: “To open the doors of truth, and to fortify the habit of testing everything by reason, are the most effectual manacles we can rivet on the hands of our successors to prevent their manacling the people with their own consent.”¹⁰ “Ignorance and bigotry, like other insanities, are incapable of self-government.”¹¹ “Above all things, I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good senses we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.”¹² “The diffusion of in-

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formation, I deem [one] of the essential principles of our government and, consequently, [one] which ought to shape its administration."¹³ "Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like spirits at the dawn of day."¹⁴

Thus we see that Jefferson places education at the foundation of democracy. Ignorance and sound self-government cannot exist together; the one destroys the other. It follows that in any society where self-government and liberty are to be fostered, it becomes the duty—the very law of self-preservation demands it—of that society to educate every member of the group who must assume any of the responsibility of government. We may not agree as to the extent of this obligation—one, two, three, or more years of free education—but the necessity of a minimum degree of enlightenment is beyond all question. Here, with his characteristic insight, Jefferson went to the root of this problem, while many of his contemporaries failed completely to appreciate the basic relationship which must determine the success of popular government.

The first and easily the most important consideration in Jefferson's mind was the preparation of the voter so that he might express a well-founded opinion by means of the ballot, thus insuring good government and the preservation of liberty. But out of this same universal education comes a by-product of almost equal value to society. By furnishing an opportunity to every child in the country to demonstrate his mental capacity and by carrying on those of superior ability to the higher levels of education, Jefferson's system would permit the natural rise of the mentally qualified to positions of leadership in society, regardless of the group in which they had their origin. Class rule thus becomes impossible—no class has a monopoly on talent—and the "true aristoi"

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coming out of every group rise to their rightful place, ready to assume the leadership upon which the success of self-government depends. As Confucius has put it, "There being instruction, there will be no distinction of classes."¹⁵ Jefferson says that, had his plan for universal education been adopted, "Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts."¹⁶ He agreed further with Confucius, who first advocated the system of examination for public office, when he said, "Nature has wisely provided an aristocracy of virtue and talent for the direction of the interests of society, and scattered it with equal hand through all its conditions."¹⁷ By means of his proposed educational system, he hoped to make possible the rise of this "aristocracy of virtue and talent" to its rightful place of power. No governing class must be allowed to develop, and education must prevent such a development.

Education, carried to every nook and corner of the great republic, is the only guarantee of liberty, equality, and successful popular government. Jefferson was convinced that, without this foundation, every effort to perpetuate the principles for which the people had fought the Revolution was certain to fail. Given such a diffusion of knowledge, he had full faith in the ultimate triumph of true democracy.

Jefferson thought of education as a function of the States, rather than of the Federal Government, and it is natural that he should do so. Before there was a Federation, he was already interested in education, and his later detailed plans for an educational system were built up around the State as a unit. There is no evidence that he came to think of the Federal Government as in any way responsible for the education of the citizens of the country. Whether he would have

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questioned the advisability or the constitutionality of Federal assistance to the States for purposes of education cannot be definitely determined. But when we appreciate the fundamental philosophy underlying all his reasoning in regard to education in relation to the state, it is difficult to think that he would not have been one of the first to recognize the benefits to be derived from Federal grants to the States for educational purposes. It is hardly probable that he would have questioned the advisability of the establishment of the land-grant colleges. It is likely, on the other hand, that he would have supported enthusiastically any movement to equalize educational opportunity among the States.

Universal educational opportunity, within the State, was the basic idea in his proposed system. It is important to the nation as a whole, as well as to the individual States, that every child in the country be given free educational opportunity on a minimum level. Whenever the requirements of that minimum cannot be met by any State, the welfare of the Union demands that the Federal Government make some provision to remedy such a situation. This can best be done through Federal aid for support of primary schools.

There has never been a time in the history of the United States when the destiny of the Union depended so much on the "universal diffusion of knowledge" as it does today. With new concepts of government developing throughout the world, the problem of recognizing sound doctrine and steering a political course which will insure the future safety of the country was never so difficult. Never were the people of this country called upon to make decisions on more complex political, social, and economic questions. Never were the words of Jefferson more significant, that we cannot hope to remain ignorant and free.

There is another aspect of education which has been

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forced upon the attention of the entire world by the war. The hope of any nation for continued independence and freedom depends, to an extent never before even approached, upon the ability of its citizens to produce and operate the mechanical weapons of warfare. The airplane, the tank, the bomb, and the torpedo seem destined to determine the future of mankind. The very destiny of a nation today is determined in the laboratory, work-shop, and factory. Even the avowed enemies of democracy and enlightenment recognize this. Thus Japan is obliged to diffuse among her people as much technical Western knowledge as possible while at the same time guarding her people from political and social knowledge. Thus, too, Nazi Germany has actually introduced a sort of democracy in her army, in which she has trained each recruit to the limit of his abilities regardless of the class from which he springs. Hence even the German experience testifies to the practical validity of Jefferson's principles, even while they have been turned to anti-democratic purposes.

Surely the task of preparing the necessary army of skilled workers in whose hands the destiny of our nation rests, cannot be left entirely to the several States. A great new educational burden now faces the nation. As in many another time of change, the Constitution must now be interpreted as placing the responsibility of preparing a trained citizenry upon the Federal Government. Even Confucius knew that it was folly to lead an unenlightened army into battle. Education is the only hope of the democracies of the world today. The Union must not fail in its own preservation.

But not all public instruction, even if universal, and compulsory, is education. If it were, then the totalitarian enemies of democracy could also call themselves Jeffersonian. But Jefferson did not hold to be education that controlled propa-

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ganda which is but the prostitution of education to some ulterior purpose. Jefferson believed in enlightenment, not in guidance through controlled and selected information. Jefferson had full faith in the ability of the human reason to make its own proper decisions, when given opportunity to study all sides of any question. This is what he meant when he said, "Truth is great and will prevail . . ." ¹⁸ and "Truth is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error." ¹⁹ No man ever had more decided ideas of what was good in government; yet Jefferson would not use the schools to propagate his own opinions.

The important consideration for Jefferson was not the particular curriculum to be taught. Opportunity to learn was the only thing absolutely necessary. "A system of general instruction," he says, "which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest. Nor am I tenacious of the form in which it shall be introduced. Be that what it may, our descendants will be as wise as we are, and will know how to amend and amend it, until it shall suit their circumstances. Give it to us then in any shape, and receive for the inestimable boon the thanks of the young and the blessings of the old, who are past all other services but prayers for the prosperity of their country, and blessings for those who promote it." ²⁰

While Jefferson's interest in education was based primarily on its general social and political significance, he was not at all unaware of its value to each individual. He would have instructed the farmer in the science of tilling the soil, the merchant in the principles of trade, every man in those fields which would make it easier for him to live and provide his physical needs. Every man should be given opportunity to

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study in those branches of the sciences most fitted to his mental capacity and inclination.

Nor would he have felt inclined to limit anyone's study to the subjects which had immediate bearing on the daily activities of life. The culture resulting from every branch of study, the personal pleasure of learning to interpret intelligently the phenomena of life as they present themselves, the stimulating effect of conversation with the learned—these great personal emoluments derived from the pursuit of learning were all evident to him. He would have agreed with St. Thomas Aquinas that "Among all human pursuits the study of wisdom is more perfect, more sublime, more useful, and more pleasant. More perfect it is because in as much as a man gives himself to the pursuit of wisdom, in so much has he already won some part in the true beatitude; hence the wise man says, 'Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom!' It is more sublime, because through it, before all else, man approaches to the similitude of the Divine which has made all things in wisdom."²¹ He would have agreed, too, with Confucius, who asks, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?"²² Jefferson's entire life bespoke the joy of learning: "The silent treasuring up of knowledge; learning without satiety . . ."²³ Well could it be said of him, as Confucius once said of himself, "He is simply a man, who in his eager pursuit of knowledge forgets his food, who in the joy of *its attainment* forgets his sorrows, and who does not perceive that old age is coming on."²⁴

Much as he glorified learning, Jefferson did not forget that there were other virtues which must be placed even before wisdom. In a letter to Dr. Rush he once wrote, ". . . for thus I estimate the qualities of the mind 1. good humor. 2. integrity. 3. industry. 4. science."²⁵ It is evident that learn-

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ing must have a foundation in the more essential qualities which make for true worth in man. Yet without sound information, even the man of virtue may be led into embarrassing and sometimes confusing situations. Learning must be the guide to virtue. Again quoting Confucius, the greatest advocate of education the world has ever known, the man who glorified learning as it has never been glorified by any other, "Yew, have you heard the six words to which are attached six becloudings? . . . There is the love of being benevolent without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to foolish simplicity. There is the love of knowing without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to dissipation of mind. There is the love of being sincere without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to injurious disregard of consequences. There is the love of straightforwardness without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to rudeness. There is the love of boldness without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to insubordination. There is the love of firmness without the love of learning;—the beclouding here leads to extravagant conduct."²⁶ There is no aspect of life which cannot be made safer, saner, and fuller when protected, tempered, and glorified by the wisdom to be sought in study. The classics, history, art and the sciences furnish the fertile field in which man may spend a lifetime searching out the learning which rounds him into a perfect individual and an ideal member of society.

Much as we have already referred to Confucius, this discussion would not be complete without one more statement from the Chinese sage: "My children, why do you not study the Book of Poetry? The *Odes* serve to stimulate the mind. They may be used for purpose of self-contemplation. They teach the art of sociability. They show how to regulate feel-

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ings of resentment. From them you learn the more immediate duty of serving one's father, and the remoter one of serving one's prince. From them we become largely acquainted with the names of birds, beasts, and plants." ²⁷ If these be the rewards of learning, surely Jefferson may be classed among the very learned of the world.

We must not suppose that Jefferson considered the school the sole source of learning. He thought of the press as exerting great educational influence on the general public. This medium of education must be free to enlighten the people on every issue of importance, without restriction or supervision. As long as the people of the country can read, the free press may be depended upon to enlighten them on all public matters, and they may be expected to reach sound conclusions which will be manifest in sane government. Even though they may "not be all and always well informed," Jefferson was willing to trust his own political destiny and that of his country in their hands, once the opportunity for universal education was provided.

Jefferson was one of the world's greatest liberals. He accepted the theory of progress. He had full faith in the ability of enlightened men to solve all their social, political, and economic problems. He would have accepted the Mormon adage, "The glory of God is intelligence." And a paraphrase of another similar saying might well have fallen from his lips, A nation is saved no faster than it gains knowledge.



4

Agriculture and Democracy

THOMAS JEFFERSON WAS a product of the agricultural life of western Virginia. Although he spent many years of his life away from his estate, his interest in his own farm, and in the farmer in general, was never lessened by these long separations from actual contact with their concerns. Willing at all times to serve his county, his State, and his nation, he would always have preferred to be at home, enjoying the company of his family and supervising the activities of the estate. Farming was his first love. He says himself that he would never "wear any other character than that of a farmer,"¹ a statement which may appear strange to those who have thought of him only as a great statesman. Many of his ideas of government were born of his contact with the soil. The American farmer stood at the very center of his entire scheme of government. The hope of more clearly understanding many of his statements on the possibilities of governmental development justifies an interest in his views toward the tillers of the soil.

Jefferson's great interest in agriculture is manifest in his correspondence at all periods of his life. His letters clearly reveal the same penetrating insight into agricultural prob-

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lens which is always evident in his political utterances. The capacity of Jefferson's mind is astounding. Visitors at Monticello found him able to converse intelligently on the most varied of subjects, and his letters display a universality of interest and understanding seldom possessed by one man. Similarly, his knowledge of plant life, as shown especially in his *Notes on Virginia*, stamps him as a leading botanist of his day. In a paper read before the American Philosophical Society in 1792, Benjamin Smith Barton said, "In the various departments of this science, but especially in botany and in zoology, the information of this gentleman [Jefferson] is equalled by that of few persons in the United States." But his interest and his knowledge were equally evident in the field of geology and other branches of natural history. He was one of the foremost American naturalists of his times. Finally, his knowledge of agriculture went far beyond that of the skillful farmer; he was one of the first farmer-scientists in the history of our country.

On his return to his estate in 1794 after an absence of nearly ten years, Jefferson wrote to Washington that he was planning to put into operation a system of crop rotation which involved all the principles of present-day soil conservation. He says he had determined "on a division of my farm into six fields, to be put under this rotation: first year, wheat; second, corn, potatoes, peas; third, rye or wheat, according to circumstances; fourth and fifth, clover where the fields will bring it, and buckwheat dressings where they will not; sixth, folding and buckwheat dressings."² This letter is especially interesting because it illustrates the thoroughness with which Jefferson attacked every problem and the soundness of his conclusions. Here he has a program which would meet with the approval of any extension agent from the University which he founded.

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It is not necessary to point out repeatedly what might have been had the wisdom of Jefferson prevailed in America. The wise of all times have always been ahead of their day and probably always will be. But that need not be the case here if Jefferson's dream of an enlightened and trained citizenry, trained in many fields, becomes a fact in America. Jefferson seems to have understood the necessity of crop rotation. Was he a soil chemist? Did he understand that crops may both add to and take away from the values of the land? Was he an economist? Did he understand the consequences of a one-crop system? Was he a sociologist? Did he understand the social effects that follow in the wake of the poverty of the waster? Did he know the ills that result from malnutrition? Did he realize that a sound agriculture must be built on knowledge in all these fields? He seems to have contemplated all these things.

When Jefferson said that slavery was bad for the country, he spoke not as a mere sentimentalist with some vague if exalted ideas about liberty and equality. No, he spoke as an economist and a sociologist. He knew that a condition that bred war, poverty, and disease was not good for any country. When he protested against slavery, he saw the evil effects that such an institution must have on the whole fiber of society. When he advocated universal diffusion of knowledge, he saw in such a spread of sound information the only force that could forestall the very destruction of society; he was not merely indulging the pretty sentiment that schooling would make people more refined. So, too, when Jefferson advocated a sound agricultural policy, he did so that the results of discontent and poverty among the rural population might be avoided.

Wherever his duties called him, Jefferson was ever ready

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to seize the opportunity to study new methods of farming; he was always eager to find a new plant, to learn of a new method of culture, to observe the general welfare of the rural population. Even when we might well expect his mind to be fully occupied with more momentous problems, we find him giving his attention to the plants and animals about him, comparing them with those to be found in his native State, wondering whether or not they might be introduced into some section of the country where they were as yet unknown. He always had time to discuss agricultural problems with anyone interested in such matters. He always gave evidence that no subject could crowd out or replace his interest in the life to which he always longed to retire.

In a letter to Lafayette, written as he was traveling in Europe, Jefferson reveals something of the methods he employed in his first-hand observation. "I go to see, what travellers think alone worthy of being seen"; he says, "but I make a job of it, and generally gulp it all down in a day. On the other hand, I am never satisfied with rambling through the fields and farms, examining the culture and cultivators."³ And commenting further on his interest in the life of the peasants, he says, "To do it most effectually, you must be absolutely incognito, you must ferret the people out of their hovels as I have done, look into their kettles, eat their bread, loll on their beds under pretense of resting yourself, but, in fact, to find if they are soft."⁴ Into whatever country he went, he took the same interest in the soil, the plants, and the methods of farming. Writing of his visit to England, he says, "I traversed England much, and own both town and country fell short of my expectations. Comparing it with France, I found a much greater proportion of barrens, a soil, in other parts, not naturally so good

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as this, not better cultivated, but better manured, and therefore more productive. This proceeds from the practice of long leases there, and short ones here.”⁵

His interest in the agriculture of foreign countries was both objective and practical. He was a scientist and a seeker after knowledge, but he was above all a practical farmer, interested in plants, animals, and methods which could benefit the farmers of Virginia or of some other of the American States. After noting a long list of Jefferson’s interests while serving as Minister to France, Hirst remarks, “Last but not least we must recall Jefferson’s services to American agriculture. He sent seeds of various grasses, acorns of the cork oak, a whole cargo of olive plants, and information about innumerable fruits and vegetables to agricultural societies, scientific farmers, and botanists in Charleston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. It is said that his gifts of Italian rice to the planters of South Carolina enabled them to produce the best rice in the world. He sent them also seed rice from the Levant, from Egypt, from the East Indies, and from Cochin China, which last he procured from a ‘young prince of that country lately gone from hence.’ Was there ever such an Ambassador?”⁶

It is evident that Jefferson considered such service to his country of the greatest importance. He says, himself, that “The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add an useful plant to its culture; especially a bread grain; next in value to bread is oil.”⁷ Even more impressive is another statement of the same nature, in which he says, “I received the seeds of the bread tree. . . . One service of this kind rendered to a nation, is worth more to them than all the victories of the most splendid pages of their history, and becomes a source of exalted pleasure to those who have been instrumental in it.”⁸ What a satisfaction this estimate

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from so great a man must be to those scientists who have scoured the world in search of new plants to add to those already being cultivated on the farms of the United States. When we see the great transformation that has been brought about in our "Corn Belt" by the introduction of the soy bean,* the new stability that has resulted, the general improvement in farm conditions, we appreciate the truth of what Jefferson said. Here, as in so many phases of national life, his insight is almost astonishing.

Jefferson's agricultural outlook was characteristic of his progressive attitude in all other matters. He was not content to accept the cultural methods of his day as the final word in farming practice. He was not willing to accept the crops being grown on the farms as necessarily those best suited to the needs of the farmers. He was ever willing to look for something new and to try it out in competition with the old. He foresaw the need of reliance on some public agency in testing new plants and new methods, realizing that the individual farmer was able neither financially nor by training to carry on such needed investigation. He foresaw, indeed, the experiment station, if not the land-grant college. While in France as Minister, Jefferson wrote to William

* "When we were in Japan the soy bean furnished bulk for our morning soup, as it did for most of the poor of that land. Since then, through experimentation, the lowly soy bean has been found to have a multitude of uses, ranks with our 'strategic and critical materials' in importance. It has played its part in the industrialization of our farms. It brought vital readjustment in the Corn Belt, made continued farm life possible when something had to take the place of food for 10,000,000 horses replaced by machines in the 30,000,000 crop-acres and 15,000,000 acres of pasture now made useless. I am told there is no phase of our life that the soy bean does not enter."

—Quoted from the Commencement Address at the Utah State Agricultural College, delivered by the author on May 31, 1941, and printed in the *Congressional Record* of June 2, 1941, page A2751.

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Drayton of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, "Perhaps I may render some service by forwarding to the Society such new objects of culture as may be likely to succeed in the soil and climate of South Carolina. In an infant country, as ours is, these experiments are important. We are probably far from possessing, as yet, all the articles of culture for which nature has fitted our country. To find out these, will require abundance of unsuccessful experiments. But if, in a multitude of these, we make one useful acquisition, it repays our trouble. Perhaps it is the peculiar duty of associated bodies to undertake these experiments. Under this sense of the views of the society . . . I shall be attentive to procure for them the seeds of such plants as they will be so good as to point out to me, or as shall occur to myself as worthy their notice."⁹

In planning for the establishment of the University of Virginia, Jefferson made provision for an experimental plat of six acres on which were to be planted "exotics of distinguished usefulness and accommodated to our climate—larch, cedar of Lebanon, cork oak, the marronnier, mahogany, the catachu or Indian rubber tree of Napul, Teak tree or Indian oak of Burman, various woods of Brazil."¹⁰ Here is the forerunner of the greatest system of agricultural experimentation ever developed in the history of the world.

Time after time, Jefferson retired to his estate at Monticello, hoping to be able to devote himself to the life he most desired, only to be called again to serve his country. Naturally a philosopher, he loved the quiet of the country; a scientist by nature, he enjoyed the opening of every bud, the harvesting of every crop; deeply devoted to his daughters and grandchildren, he longed to enjoy their company and take part in their education. "My farm, my family, my books and my building, give me more pleasure," he says, "than any

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public office would, and, especially, one which would keep me constantly from them.”¹¹ That he was happiest when at home there can be little doubt, in the light of his repeated expression of pleasure at the opportunity to retire there and escape the pressure of public life. During the brief period from the time of his resignation from the position of Secretary of State until his election as Vice President he seems to have been quite contented on his farm. In a letter to John Adams, written during this period, he says, “I thank you . . . for your felicitations on my present quiet. The difference of my present and past situation is such as to leave me nothing to regret, but that my retirement has been postponed four years too long. The principles on which I calculated the value of life, are entirely in favor of my present course.”¹² This last sentence is especially significant, revealing as it does a bit of his fundamental personal philosophy. The same thought is expressed in a letter written a year later, in which he says, “As to the concerns of my own country, I leave them willingly and safely to those who will have a longer interest in cherishing them. My books, my family, my friends, and my farm, furnish more than enough to occupy me the remainder of my life, and of that tranquil occupation most analogous to my physical and moral constitution.”¹³

Jefferson has drawn for us a picture of the farmer of his day, the man who was to play so important a part in his scheme of government. Writing in 1778, he thus describes the Virginia country gentleman of his day: “I know no condition happier than that of a Virginia farmer might be, conducting himself as he did during the war. His estate supplies a good table, clothes himself and his family with their ordinary apparel, furnishes a small surplus to buy salt, sugar, coffee, and a little finery for his wife and daughters,

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enables him to receive and to visit his friends and furnishes him pleasing and healthy occupation. To secure all this, he needs the one act of self-denial, to put off buying anything until he has the money to pay for it.”¹⁴ Strange philosophy, perhaps, in this day of installment purchasing, yet sound, all will agree.

But the ultimate success of this type of independent and self-sustaining life is the ability of the owner to preserve each year his basic capital, upon which his future income must depend. Throughout his public career, Jefferson took much the same frugal attitude toward government expenditures and financial policy. The statesman’s first duty is to see that the basic capital of the country is not only preserved but increased and that the state shall, like the farmer, live on the income and never on the capital. The financial structure cannot be preserved unless all the elements essential to the capital structure are protected.

It is interesting to note that Jefferson failed to apply the same economic principle to the nation that he applied to the individual. He would have the individual farmer as nearly self-supporting as possible. On his own farm he produced and manufactured practically everything that his family and slaves needed, except, as he says, a little finery for the women. He even had a nail factory, in which he produced more nails than he needed for his own use. Yet he was willing to leave the country dependent upon Europe for the greater part of the manufactured articles it needed.

On a later frontier, Brigham Young, while, like Jefferson, emphasizing agriculture above every other occupation, looked upon the people of Utah, whose activities he so completely directed, as a large family; and he understood the need of making them self-sustaining, independent of the

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outside world. With this purpose in mind, he undertook to establish all the essential industries within the borders of the State (Territory then). Cotton, mulberry, and sugar culture were undertaken as the basis for the manufacture of cotton goods, silk, and sugar. Tanneries were established and leather goods were manufactured to meet the needs of the people. A beginning was made toward the development of the iron and coal resources of the territory. Rapid transportation has brought about a complete reorientation in regard to the concepts of self-sufficiency of family or larger group; yet it is of interest, as suggested before, that Jefferson did not apply the same reasoning to the larger group that he employed when he thought of the individual estate. The reason for this may have been the fact that Jefferson, as he looked into the future of the new-born republic, saw it as a great agricultural country. Especially in his earlier thinking, he conceived the new nation as one made up almost exclusively of farmers. He had great faith in the farmer. The tiller of the soil was to be the cornerstone of the great structure of republicanism. "Agriculture is the basis of the subsistence, the comforts and the happiness of man,"¹⁵ he says. It was also the basis of stability in government, the basis of true morality, and the guarantee of freedom. "The pursuits of agriculture . . . are the best preservative of morals."¹⁶ "Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers."¹⁷ "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if He ever had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar

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deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth.”¹⁸

Compared with the farmer, the artisan and trader suffered in the mind of Jefferson, and his references to them might well be overlooked, were it not for the fact that his policy toward trade and manufacture was so greatly influenced by his estimate of the general character of those engaged in such pursuits. We can hardly agree with him, when he says, “I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice, and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned.”¹⁹ Nor can we accept his statement that “The proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any State to that of its husbandmen, is, generally speaking, the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption.”²⁰ These harsh statements probably represent his fear of the landless groups of society, of commercial competition, of labor unrest, and they must be taken in conjunction with the almost unlimited opportunities that then existed for acquiring a piece of land large enough for subsistence farming. Jefferson would have minimized the non-farming elements in our nation, even turning the artisans of the Old World who found their way to America to agricultural pursuits. Jefferson could see stability in society only in the ownership of land, from which usable wealth could be produced. He merely overlooked the fact, which even in this day is not fully appreciated, that the worker’s capital in his skill, his tools, and his ability to sell his labor are also elements making for stability, like the farmer’s capital in land. In a money economy, if it is healthy and prosperous, the fruits of this workers’ capital may also be invested in channels that make

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for stability—in the purchase of savings, insurance, annuities, and such non-productive properties as homes and automobiles.

"With honesty and self-government for her portion, agriculture may abandon contentedly to others the fruits of commerce and corruption,"²¹ Jefferson says. And in a similar vein, "While we have land to labor, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, and smiths, are wanting in husbandry; but for the general operations of manufacture, let our work shops remain in Europe."²² As trade with Europe became more and more difficult, during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, Jefferson reluctantly withdrew from his extreme stand on this matter of the undesirability of fostering manufacturing in America, but he never ceased to maintain the opinion that the United States should be essentially agricultural. His purchase of Louisiana and his sending of the Lewis and Clark expedition were essentially steps to increase the agricultural resources of the country to such a point that it would be many years before the people would have to turn to manufacturing and trade.

Needless to say, it was part of Jefferson's dream that the tillers of the American soil should also be the owners of the land. His successful attempt to change the laws of inheritance so as to help break up the large estates, his plan for the distribution of government land, and his entire attitude toward farm tenure were all based on a firm conviction that land ownership was essential to successful agriculture and stability of government.

History furnishes ample evidence on which he could base such a theory of good government. All lasting civilization has been built on the foundation of sound agricultural prac-

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tice. Commenting on this fact in *Chinese Political Thought*, I have said, "Early marriage was made possible, because of a just economic system which allowed about equal distribution of land among single owners. This, in turn, made for democracy as well as for economic and social equality. Agriculture has always been the foundation of society and has at all times been encouraged and supported by the government. The farmer ranked next to the scholar in the social division.

"Because of the division of land, military defeats never made a lasting impression on China, and even the disorder and interstate strife of the later Chou period had no lasting ill effects. Was it for this reason that, while the Huns overran Europe, they made no impression on China, although they were the same Huns? And was it also for this same reason that the Mongols, who trampled Europe and conquered China, were in turn assimilated by China and made Chinese?"²⁸

Early in China's history she learned the great economic and political fundamentals which Jefferson seemed also to understand. First, that if you divide the wealth, you unite the people; but if you gather the wealth into one place or concentrate it in the hands of one class, you divide the people. And, secondly, that the only classes permissible in society are those which are distinguished by the merit of the individuals composing them, not by the accident of birth. American democracy, constituted as it is today, can persist only if we are left to come and go freely, buy and sell as we wish, own and dispose to individual advantage, and preserve at all hazards the capital structure as it is related to each individual. Thus we can produce a classless society if we preserve to each person in our society his right to that from which his living comes and hence to that from

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which his contributions to society must also come. If we preserve the individual in his property rights, we preserve the American state.

Like Jefferson, the Chinese and Japanese recognized the farmer as one of the most important groups in the social and political make-up of the country. The Chinese placed him in social rank second only to the scholar, the Japanese second to the soldier, and both put him above the merchant and trader. While he did not usually own his own land, his welfare was always considered of prime importance to the stability of government; and "to see that smoke arises from every chimney in the village" was the first duty of every good ruler.

Following this same philosophy, Brigham Young, leader of the greatest organized colonization scheme in the history of the United States, insisted that his followers become farmers. Distribution of the land equally among the settlers, and the binding of his followers to the soil by means of the ties of ownership, were fundamental principles in his plan of merging his mixed following into a united and stable society. He strongly discouraged mining and trade, fully convinced that agriculture must be the basis of prosperity and stability in his inland empire. Neither Jefferson nor Brigham Young foresaw the era of industrial development so soon to arise, the dawn of the machine age, of rapid transportation, of international interdependence, and the improvement in agricultural methods which would make possible the employment of larger and larger portions of the population in work other than agricultural. Each was fundamentally sound, however, in stressing the importance of widespread land ownership as a stabilizing factor in society.

The individuals making up the agricultural population of Jefferson's time were relatively independent. The day of

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specialization in farming had not yet arrived. Everything needed by the farmer and his dependents could be produced on the plantation. The farmer's money needs were extremely few. His living came almost entirely from the soil which he cultivated. Such a situation made naturally for independence and stability, the two characteristics which Jefferson considered most essential to the founding of a democracy. As has been said, he had ample justification in history for this attitude. The great lasting civilizations have been those grounded in a sound agriculture. The nations which have disappeared have been those which have lost this contact. The conquerors of past ages who wished completely to destroy their vanquished enemies did so by removing the peasants and replacing them with farmers from among their own subjects. Once the ownership of the soil is relinquished by any people, its doom is fairly sealed. Hitler, sad to relate, understands this principle. Though armies may be defeated, if the land is left in the hands of the peasants, a new nation will sooner or later rear its head. Knowing this, Jefferson was a great prophet of agriculture.



5

The American Experiment

As we follow the trend of Jefferson's thought, it becomes increasingly evident that he considered the newly liberated Colonies a laboratory wherein could be worked out a great experiment in practical self-government. The United States was to be a proving ground on which the principles which he held almost sacred could be tried out before being submitted to the world as a possible solution of the problems of government which faced all peoples. Many of his statements and attitudes can be explained only in the light of this attitude.

Jefferson was quite certain that the former Colonies furnished, at the end of the Revolution, the one situation in the world suitable to the successful functioning of his ideas of self-government. He was a theorist, having developed very definite ideas concerning good government even before the beginning of the Revolution; but he was also a practical young man who had faced the realities of western Virginia and realized that all theories had to be proved practical in order to be of any real value. Here, in the free American States, he saw the opportunity to put to the test the theories which he had accepted as the basis of good government.

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Here, too, was the golden opportunity to prove to the world that, once freed from the tyranny of hereditary rulers, the people could set up a government the powers of which were retained within themselves, delegating to their rulers only those powers which were considered absolutely essential to the successful functioning of society.

Jefferson believed that the people of the Colonies possessed, as did no other group of people situated where such an experiment might be undertaken, an inheritance which especially fitted them for this important undertaking. He was rightly aware of the importance of their Anglo-Saxon background, with its love of freedom and its faith in the rights of the common people and in their ability to control partially the activities of their rulers. So important did he consider this legacy that, when he outlined the course of study for the University of Virginia, he provided for a Chair of Anglo-Saxon, hoping that a study of that early language would fix more firmly in the minds of all students the value of the rights which their parents had so hardly won.*

With the Anglo-Saxon blood upon which to lay the foundation of his great experiment, Jefferson thought he had also the second requirement for the success of a self-governing democracy. In his mind the chances of achieving lasting results in such an undertaking were much greater when tried by an agricultural people than by any others. To him, in fact, it was questionable whether true self-government could be established among any but an agricultural people.

* In one of William Jennings Bryan's great speeches, delivered in India during his trip around the world, he told the Indian people that, regardless of any feelings they might have toward the British Raj, they should never forget that in bringing them the English language the British brought them the language of liberty, a blessing in very deed.

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"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else."¹ This statement, contained in a letter written in 1785, represents an oft-repeated conviction that "Farmers, whose interests are entirely agricultural, are the true representatives of the great American interests, and are alone to be relied on for expressing the proper American sentiments."²

In America there was agricultural land enough to make it possible for all citizens to own and cultivate their own farms. In the early stages of his life, Jefferson would have had growing America remain essentially agricultural. As we have seen, he had a poor opinion of those engaged in trade, and but little more respect for the artisan. Typical of his attitude in this regard is a statement made in a letter to William H. Crawford that "The agricultural capacities of our country constitute its distinguishing feature; and the adapting our policy and pursuits to that, is more likely to make us a numerous and happy people, than the mimicry of an Amsterdam, a Hamburg, or a city of London."³ Jefferson saw in the new Americans, devoted to agriculture, and "lands enough to employ an infinite number of people in their cultivation,"⁴ a laboratory ideally suited for an experiment in self-government with some hope of a successful result.

Out of this experiment Jefferson hoped to produce what he conceived to be the sole object of all government: "The equal rights of man, and the happiness of every individual."⁵ He would have accepted without reservation Confucius' statement that "Good government obtains when those who

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are near are made happy and when those who are far are attracted.”⁶ Nor would he have disagreed with Mencius, who said, “The people are the most important element, the sovereign, least important.”⁷ Jefferson had full faith in the ability of an agricultural people, with a background of Anglo-Saxon inheritance, to produce through their own regulation a society of happy, prosperous, and contented individuals.

One more essential element in this experiment in government was the distance which separated America from the Old World nations, which might otherwise either corrupt the form or directly interfere with the carrying out of the objectives of the newly established republican government. It seemed of prime importance to Jefferson that European influences be excluded from the young federation, lest those at home not in full sympathy with the new liberty be encouraged in their opposition, or the nations of Europe build up hopes of overthrowing the government that was a challenge to all the monarchies of the world. His concern for the final triumph of the great experiment gave to many of his utterances the appearance of provincialism and caused many of his biographers to fail to recognize his universal interest in the welfare of mankind.

But Jefferson could take no chances. Every influence that might possibly breed discord or lead to failure of the federation must be kept from American shores. “When we reflect that the eyes of the virtuous all over the earth are turned with anxiety on us, as the only depositaries of the sacred fire of liberty, and that our falling into anarchy would decide forever the destinies of mankind, and seal the political heresy that man is incapable of self-government, the only contest between divided friends should be who will dare farthest into the ranks of the common enemy.”⁸ These

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words of Jefferson plainly indicate how sacred he considered the cause to which he had dedicated himself. He was convinced that "The last hope of human liberty in this world rests on us," and that "we ought, for so dear a stake, to sacrifice every attachment and every enmity."⁹

If the American experiment worked, it would demonstrate to the world, first of all, that it was entirely possible for the people to govern themselves. According to Jefferson's philosophy there was no way for the people to be certain of those rights which insure their happiness except by keeping the government in their own hands. Jefferson had no confidence in any agency other than the people. On the other hand, he had a profound faith in the ability of an enlightened people to establish a government which could function under any and all circumstances. He was, therefore, extremely jealous of the delegation of the powers which rested, according to his ideas, solely with the people. It was for this reason that he opposed the eligibility of the President for re-election. It was for the same reason that he feared a life term for any judge. And with the same fear in mind, he opposed the creation of a standing army. Under no circumstances should the opportunity be afforded for the power of government to slip from the hands of the people.

The great question in Jefferson's mind was how to set up a government controlled by the people which would insure them freedom and happiness. Given the "set-up," as the modern experimenter would say, what ingredients must be put into the test tube to bring about successful self-government? Jefferson had very definite ideas as to what he would like to see go into that experiment. There were certain rights which he considered fundamental, "natural rights" he called them. He was convinced that the maintenance of these rights was essential to the happiness of man. These

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rights no government could justly take away from the individual. Could a society based on a guarantee of these rights be made to function? Jefferson showed himself ready to discover an affirmative answer to that question by insisting on the preservation of these rights in America.

Into the experimental test tube Jefferson would, then, put freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, freedom of person, and freedom of opportunity. There were many who thought that such a mixture would cause an explosion which would blow the new government to atoms. But not so Jefferson. His primary criticism of the Constitution, which he made while he was in France, was that it contained no guarantee of these freedoms.

There can be no doubt of the confidence which Jefferson felt in the outcome of this experiment provided he could have the people educated to the point where every man could know what was going on about him. It was his great concern for the success of the government which made him the great champion of universal education. He would not educate the citizens for their own improvement or for the mere pleasure of learning, as Confucius would do, but that they might govern themselves successfully. "Education," he said, "is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."¹⁰

Freedom of the press and freedom of speech are important because it is through these avenues that the people are enabled to act wisely in their own self-government. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be. The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information.

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Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.”¹¹ Here is illustrated one of the bases of Jefferson’s political philosophy, a faith in the common sense of the common man.

Jefferson had ample opportunity to demonstrate his complete faith in his own philosophy. In the face of determined opposition by many of his friends he worked successfully for the abolition of entail and primogeniture; in the face of bitter opposition from the Church, he succeeded in bringing about religious liberty in Virginia; and during his own administration he had many opportunities to prove that he did not waver in his determination to uphold the freedom of speech and of the press. He never for a moment supposed that anyone had a right to suppress any publication or to take steps to prevent any statement which a citizen wished to make. In answer to a suggestion that he as President take such action, he replied, “Considering the great importance to the public liberty of the freedom of the press, and the difficulty of submitting it to very precise rules, the laws have thought it less mischievous to give greater scope to its freedom than to the restraint of it. The President has, therefore, no authority to prevent publications of the nature of those you complain of.”¹²

Jefferson had ample opportunity to feel some of the uncomfortable effects of a free press, in the bitter attacks made on him when he ran for re-election. In his second inaugural address, he set forth his conclusions on this matter in a long and very significant paragraph which is worthy of the careful attention of all those who may have had to face the attacks of a hostile press. “During this course of administration and in order to disturb it, the artillery of the press has been levelled against us, charged with whatsoever its licentiousness could devise or dare. These abuses of an institu-

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tion so important to freedom and science, are deeply to be regretted, inasmuch as they tend to lessen its usefulness, and to sap its safety; they might, indeed, have been corrected by the wholesome punishments reserved and provided by the laws of the several States against falsehood and defamation; but public duties more urgent press on the time of public servants, and the offenders have therefore been left to find their punishment in the public indignation. Nor was it uninteresting to the world, that an experiment should be fairly and fully made, whether freedom of discussion, unaided by power, is not sufficient for the propagation and protection of truth—whether a government, conducting itself in the true spirit of its Constitution, with zeal and purity, and doing no act which it would be unwilling the world should witness, can be written down by falsehood and defamation. The experiment has been tried; you have witnessed the scene; our fellow-citizens looked on, cool and collected; they saw the latent source from which these outrages proceeded; they gathered around their public functionaries, and when the Constitution called them to the decision by suffrage, they pronounced their verdict, honorable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be intrusted with his own affairs. No inference is here intended, that the laws, provided by the States against false and defamatory publications, should not be enforced; he who has time, renders a service to public morals and public tranquillity, in reforming these abuses by the salutary coercions of the law; but the experiment is noted, to prove that, since truth and reason have maintained their ground against false opinions in league with false facts, the press, confined to truth, needs no other legal restraint; the public judgment will correct false reasonings and opinions, on a full hearing of all parties;

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and no other definite line can be drawn between the inestimable liberty of the press and its demoralizing licentiousness. If there be still improprieties which this rule would not restrain, its supplement must be sought in the censorship of public opinion.”¹³

In this utterance Jefferson gave expression to some of the irritation caused him by the press campaign against his candidacy. Yet in the face of all the false accusations made against him, he was still the champion of freedom of the press, was glad to have put that great principle to the test, and he gloried in what he considered vindication of the experiment.

Jefferson realized that any form of government that could tolerate free speech and freedom of the press could never become otherwise oppressive. “No experiment,” he wrote, “can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues to truth. The most effectual hitherto found, is the freedom of the press. It is, therefore, the first shut up by those who fear the investigation of their actions.”¹⁴

Not only did Jefferson never lose faith in the eventual success of the great experiment; he often expressed the belief that experience had already proved that the founders of our government were not mistaken in the fundamentals. “We think experience has proved it safer, for the mass of individuals composing the society, to reserve to themselves personally the exercise of all rightful powers to which they are competent, and to delegate those to which they are not competent to deputies named, and removable for unfaithful conduct, by themselves immediately.”¹⁵ But this does not mean that Jefferson considered the experiment in any sense

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finished. He fully appreciated the fact that further experience would inevitably make necessary many changes, and also that there would be moments when the success of the scheme might seem doubtful. Yet he never for a moment lost faith in the ultimate triumph of the great principles which underlie the system in which he was so deeply interested. "We owe every other sacrifice to ourselves, to our federal brethren, and to the world at large, to pursue with temper and perseverance the great experiment which shall prove that man is capable of living in society, governing itself by laws self-imposed, and securing to its members the enjoyment of life, liberty, property, and peace; and further to show, that even when the government of its choice shall manifest a tendency to degeneracy, we are not at once to despair but that the will and the watchfulness of its sounder parts will reform its aberrations, recall it to original and legitimate principles, and restrain it within the rightful limits of self-government."¹⁶

No price was too great to pay for the freedom and happiness which must spring from the success of the American form of government. Concerning those who had failed in their attempt to establish some equally beneficial system, Jefferson could say to John Adams, "A first attempt to recover the right of self-government may fail, so may a second, a third, etc. But as a younger and more instructed race comes on, the sentiment becomes more and more intuitive, and a fourth, a fifth, or some subsequent one of the ever renewed attempts will ultimately succeed. . . . To attain all this, however, rivers of blood must yet flow, and years of desolation pass over; yet the object is worth rivers of blood, and years of desolation. For what inheritance so valuable, can man leave to his posterity? You and I shall look down from another world on these glorious achieve-

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ments to man, which will add to the joys even of heaven."¹⁷

Jefferson was never a mere theorist. And like the good scientist, whenever his theories failed to work out in practice, he was willing to abandon them and to accept the practical test of experience. It may not be easy to harmonize some of his statements on government, unless we keep in mind his willingness to abide by the evidence which experience produced. Some persons have charged Jefferson with being inconsistent, pointing out that he seems to stand for one policy at one time and for its contrary at another time. There is no inconsistency in this attitude, for this willingness to learn from experience characterized his entire approach toward the problem of government. When he often seemed to have abandoned some ground on which he had stood most firmly in his earlier life, it is never difficult to trace the cause for his changed point of view to the simple acceptance of some new fact that experience had disclosed.

Let him tell us, himself, how his mind worked in such cases. It is well known that Jefferson was a free trader and had hoped that the United States would remain essentially an agricultural nation. But, in a letter to Hogendorp, he says, "You ask what I think on the expediency of encouraging our States to be commercial? Were I to indulge my own theory, I should wish them to practice neither commerce nor navigation, but to stand, with respect to Europe, precisely on the footing of China. . . . But this is theory only, and a theory which the servants of America are not at liberty to follow. Our people have a decided taste for navigation and commerce. They take this from their mother country; and their servants are in duty bound to calculate all their measures on this datum: we wish to do it by throwing open all the doors of commerce, and knocking off its shackles. But as this cannot be done for others, unless they will do it

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for us, and there is no probability that Europe will do this, I suppose we shall be obliged to adopt a system which may shackle them in our ports, as they do us in theirs.”¹⁸

In a letter to Benjamin Austin written in 1816, Jefferson expressed much the same attitude, indicating his willingness to accept the facts as the basis of his working philosophy. In this letter he says, “You tell me I am quoted by those who wish to continue our dependence on England for manufactures.” And well might he be so quoted, for he had said many times that the farmers of America should get their manufactured articles from the factories of England. But he goes on to say, “There was a time when I might have been so quoted with more candor, but within the thirty years which have since elapsed, how are circumstances changed!”¹⁹ He goes on to justify his changed attitude on this matter of home manufactures.

There is one other significant example of this tendency to change as experience made such change necessary. This particular change must have been difficult for Jefferson, since he had taken so firm a stand in the matter. When the Constitution was promulgated, as has already been mentioned, Jefferson was much concerned about the fact that the President was eligible for re-election. He feared that such a possibility would lead to life tenure, with its many undesirable consequences. In a letter to John Adams, written from Paris in 1787, he said that he wished “at the end of four years they had made him forever ineligible a second time.” This same idea he expressed repeatedly and it was well known to have represented Jefferson’s view on this matter, yet he allowed himself to be nominated for a second term and did not thereafter oppose the similar renomination of Madison or Monroe. For undoubtedly experience had shown him that the people of America were not of a temper

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to let any individual usurp any of their rights and make himself a dictator over them. In commenting once upon the fact that he had changed his mind about some question, he said that twenty years of experience in government was worth a hundred years of reading about it.

The great experiment is still under way. Hardly a day passes that we are not told by someone in high office that the democratic way of life is on trial, that the eyes of the world are upon the United States, the last stronghold of freedom in the modern world. We are living again the days of Thomas Jefferson. His faith in the ultimate triumph of free self-government, his firm conviction that freedom is more sacred than life itself, should stand as the world's bulwark against every form of government which would destroy the rights of common men.



6

Working Democracy

THE MOLDERS OF the American form of government found themselves, at the end of the war which gave them independence, in a peculiarly favorable situation for the establishment of a new and as yet untried set of institutions by which they hoped to make the people their own masters. The important consideration in respect to this undertaking was not the newness of the principles on which they hoped to found a workable system of government; it was, rather, the audacity of the men who dared to try out the theories of democracy that had been developed by European political thinkers. It was not the theory that was new; rather, it was the putting into practice, the testing, the faith that made the trial possible, which characterized America's contribution to the science of government. This faith in the workability of democratic theory was typified in Jefferson.

Jefferson was, indeed, the very embodiment of the new spirit of democracy which had sprung into mature being in the American Colonies. He often said that his own utterances were merely representative of the American mind. The Declaration of Independence itself represented the "harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in

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conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc.”¹ It was one thing to theorize; quite another to undertake to put the theories into practice. Many persons had talked and written on the subject of democracy, but none had ever had a similar opportunity to test it on so large a scale. These were new conditions, so new that Jefferson realized that “The full experiment of a government democratical, but representative, was and is still reserved for us. . . .”² Although the American Colonies were, perhaps, the only place where these principles could be put into practice in Jefferson’s day, he thought of them as fundamental, as basic principles which should ultimately be adopted by all the nations of the earth. It is because of their universal application that we are here primarily interested in the Jeffersonian theories of government.

The underlying principle of Jefferson’s philosophy is that governments are set up for the good of the individual members of society. The happiness of the individual members of the group is properly the chief concern of any system of group organization that may be set up. Society is for the individual, not the individual for society. Government should be so organized as to bring about, not the protection of the powers of the Prince, as in the Machiavellian scheme; nor the support of a small ruling class, as had been the case in most countries of the world; but the maximum welfare of the individuals governed. This fact cannot be overemphasized. Throughout history, wherever governments had existed—whether as the result of theory, thereby functioning in accordance with some fundamental rule, law, or constitution; or merely maintaining themselves by force and continuing by habit—they had all operated for the benefit of the rulers. The most important contribution of the Ameri-

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can experiment was the basic assumption that all government exists for the benefit of the people and the fact that it actually functioned on that assumption, although it sometimes took litigation (for which there was provision) to prove the point or bring the proper restraint upon the government. This may bring to mind the Roman principle *Pro bono publico*, but the Roman Republic was not something that each individual might assume was for his benefit; it did not, for example, give him the right to a public education. Without becoming too involved in a discussion of contrasting theories or practices, we may point out a significant difference in the attitude of people in other governments than the American. It is taken for granted among most of them that the *de facto* government is the thing to be respected, and there is usually not much waiting for the *de jure* pronouncement; whereas in America the acts of government are not necessarily accepted as binding until the matter of rights and jurisdictions has been clarified.

Government should make every man feel his own importance, should magnify him, should help him to appreciate his place in the world. Jefferson would have agreed with Emerson that not only what a man does is important, but equally what kind of man does it. Government should not corrupt man, as Rousseau maintained it did; it should not blot out individuality or merge it so completely into the social organism as to leave man a mere cog in a machine. It should not crush individuality or make man completely dependent on forces outside himself for guidance in his conduct. Individuality should be fostered and glorified, not submerged and absorbed.

President Wilson had a classroom illustration to show how the American system builds up the importance of the individual in contrast to socialistic—what we now call

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totalitarian—systems, where the importance of the whole is stressed to the detriment of its components. The American state is a union of 130,000,000 persons, each of whom counts as a unit without fusion or loss of identity, while in the totalitarian state of Nazi Germany, for example, the individual counts as 1/80,000,000 of the whole, which is the prime unit. The individual under such a system is always considered as a small fraction of a whole, and as nothing by himself.

No better statement of Jefferson's attitude has come to my attention than that of James Truslow Adams, who says in his *Living Jefferson*: "The nation for him was the sum total of the individual citizens comprising it. . . . A nation could not be happy, except as the individual citizens were happy. The pernicious doctrine, which has been so unhappily developing in many countries in the past half century, that a nation can be strong, happy, rich, powerful, great, and free, even though its government takes away all these attributes from its citizens, would have seemed insane folly to him. Nation had a very real meaning for him, but it was a meaning rooted in the lives of human beings."³ Jefferson's own word on this matter is well worthy of universal consideration: "If we are made in some degree for others, yet in a greater are we made for ourselves. It were contrary to feeling, and indeed ridiculous to suppose that a man had less rights in himself than one of his neighbors, or indeed all of them put together. This would be slavery, and not that liberty which the bill of rights has made inviolable, and for the preservation of which our government has been charged."⁴ The sum of good government, he says, is to be found in "a wise and frugal Government . . . which shall leave them [the citizens] otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not

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take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned.”⁵ Only a society of free and happy individuals can truly be termed a successful society.

The first requirement for this desired condition of individual happiness is recognition of the fact, expressed in the Declaration of Independence, that “all men are created equal.” Legally there can be no distinctions set up for different members of the group. “The true foundation of republican government is in the equal right of every citizen, in his person and property, and in their management.”⁶ This equality before the law is a right of every individual and must be guaranteed in any good government. The spirit of justice is adverse “To unequal privileges among members of the same society....”⁷ This doctrine of equality was carried even beyond the purely political field. The foundation on which all the state constitutions were built was “the natural equality of man, the denial of every pre-eminence but that annexed to legal office and, particularly, the denial of a pre-eminence by birth.”⁸

This doctrine is fundamental in any society which would hope to foster the idea of the majesty of the individual. Only when he feels himself the equal of his neighbor can a man have a true respect for himself and feel the necessary urge to successful social endeavor. History records no more stanch defender of this idea of equality than Thomas Jefferson. It was the very basis of all his political thinking. He was indeed the champion of the common man and to him more than to any other America must give credit for the survival of the doctrine of political equality. As Jesus made all men equal in the eyes of God, so Jefferson made them all equal in the eyes of the law.

In our discussion of Jefferson’s views on the nature of man, we have already outlined the reasoning by which he

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arrived at his conclusions in regard to man's place in society. He considered the theory of equality entirely justified by that same line of reasoning. In this he was in complete agreement with Milton who says, "And it were a deplorable thing indeed, if the reason mankind is endued withal, and which is the gift of God, should not furnish more arguments for men's preservation, for their deliverance, and, as much as the nature of the thing will bear, for making them equal to one another, than for their oppression, and for their utter ruin under the domineering power of one single person."⁸ Jefferson's reasoning brought him back repeatedly to the same conclusion, that all members of society should have equal privileges before the law. This was the cornerstone of all his political philosophy.

... The second basic principle upon which he built his theory of government is that all governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed." Here, indeed, was a revolutionary concept. It swept away all ideas of divine right, of hereditary rule, of class rule, the theories which had held humanity in political bondage since the dawn of history. Here was a man who had such faith in this doctrine that he was willing to place all political power in the hands of the entire body politic. No one had the right to rule, save he whom the people chose to entrust with governing powers. "I consider," he says, "the people who constitute a society or nation as the source of all authority in that nation; as free to transact their common concerns by any agents they think proper; to change these agents individually, or the organization of them in form or function whenever they please; that all the acts done by these agents under the authority of the nation are the acts of the nation, are obligatory to them and inure to their use, and can in no wise be annulled or affected by any change in the form

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of the government, or of the persons administering it.”¹⁰

The authority of the people is necessary to the formation of any government; constitutions, laws, and administrators, all have their origin and derive their authority from the governed. There was no fear in Jefferson’s mind as to the outcome of a government based on this theory.¹¹ “I have not any doubt,” he said, “that the result of our experiment will be that men are capable of governing themselves without a master.”¹² And again he says, “It is a happy truth that man is capable of self-government, and only rendered otherwise by the moral degradation designedly superinduced on him by the wicked acts of his tyrant.”¹³ His answer to those who questioned the ability of man to govern himself was, “Can he then be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels, in the form of kings, to govern him? Let history answer this question.”¹⁴ He would rather put his trust in the common man than in the hereditary ruler or in the representative of any favored class. “The steady character of our countrymen is a rock to which we may safely moor.”¹⁵

So convinced was Jefferson of the righteousness of his concept of self-government that he would not consent to any deviation from it. The will of the people is the only legitimate foundation of any government, and the first object of government is to protect the free expression of that will.¹⁶ Even in dealing with the Indian tribes, which were gradually being pushed westward, he would not force upon them any form of government which they did not desire, and he objected to President Monroe’s proposal “to subject the Indians to our laws without their consent.” He expressed the hope that “this immorality will not be permitted to stain our history.”¹⁷ Should the Indians choose to live among their white neighbors, they would of course

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be asked to live under the same system of government, but as long as they lived apart, they should be allowed to decide for themselves how they should be governed.

This opposition to Monroe's Indian policy proves beyond any cavil that Jefferson had no doubts about the validity of his theory. This policy he did not hesitate to call immoral, in spite of the general American fear of the Indians, because it ran counter to the fundamentals on which American political practice should rest. Besides the political, there is also social theory of the first order in this attitude. The attempt to force civilization, culture, and law on backward peoples has never been successful. These things must come by growth. The Indians shall have our law when the Indians choose to have it. If Jefferson's ideas had prevailed, many a clash would have been avoided, not only with the Indians within our own land, but also in our distant possessions. Too often we have insisted upon our law, not only for ourselves, but for others not yet ready or willing to accept it. In the case of the Philippines, where at the present writing American soldiers, Filipino scouts, and native tribesmen are fighting side by side against the Japanese invader, we are reaping the rewards of not adopting a policy of forced Americanization.

The free exercise of all natural rights cannot be retained in full by the individual when he becomes a member of society, for he then enters into a covenant with his fellows whereby he voluntarily modifies certain of his rights in the interest of the group. Man in society no longer has "a Right to every thing,"¹⁸ as Hobbes would say. But who shall say which rights, and how many of them, the individual is to give up? Who is to decide what power shall be given to the rulers? To these questions Jefferson had but one answer: the people should make all such decisions. All agreement to

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limit individual freedom, all agreement for joint action, all delegation of powers must originate with the people, for in them alone all authority resides. No monarch, no prince, no ruling class can rightly determine the form of covenant which shall guide community action. Jefferson could not possibly have sanctioned the procedure by means of which the Japanese Constitution was established, when the Emperor of the Meiji era, as the embodiment of all authority, bestowed upon his subjects certain rights, retaining for himself all those not mentioned in the Constitution. Jefferson acknowledged no such right as inherent in any person; the people are the sole depository of all governmental authority. This is a principle from which there could be no deviation. Here again Jefferson manifests his complete faith in the cumulative judgment of the common man.

No individual, no small group, has the right to impose its will upon society; neither does one generation have the right to bind any succeeding generation, each being free to decide its own destiny. Two pronouncements of Jefferson on this subject are worthy of consideration, for they mark him as an eternal liberal, always ready to accept the principle of progress and adjustment: "That our Creator made the earth for the use of the living and not of the dead; that those who exist not can have no use nor right in it, no authority or power over it; that one generation of men cannot foreclose or burthen its use to another, which comes to it in its own right and by the same divine beneficence; that a preceding generation cannot bind a succeeding one by its laws or contracts; these deriving their obligation from the will of the existing majority, and that majority being removed by death, another comes in its place with a will equally free to make its own laws and contracts; these are axioms so self-evident that no explanation can make them plainer; for he is not to

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be reasoned with who says that non-existence can control existence, or that nothing can move something.”¹⁹

And again he says: “Can one generation bind another, and all others, in succession forever? I think not. The Creator has made the earth for the living, not the dead. Rights and powers can only belong to persons, not to things, not to mere matter, unendowed with will. The dead are not even things. The particles of matter which composed their bodies, make part now of the bodies of other animals, vegetables, or minerals, of a thousand forms. To what, then, are attached the rights and powers they held while in the form of men? A generation may bind itself as long as its majority continues in life; when that has disappeared, another majority is in place, holds all the rights and powers their predecessors once held, and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing, then, is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man.”^{20 *}

Jefferson was willing to follow this line of thought to its logical conclusion, not even exempting the Constitution. In regard to this document, he has this to say, “Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age well: I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very like the present, but without the experience of the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a

* How, then, could Marshall lay down the principle that our Constitution was to endure through the ages? Marshall answered that question by establishing the right of judicial review. The Constitution thus becomes a living organism and the judges of this generation pronounce its present meaning and the American people are thus not bound by the will of their dead.

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century of book-reading; and this they would say themselves, were they to rise from the dead. I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with; because, when once known, we accommodate ourselves to them and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know, also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. . . . Each generation is as independent of the one preceding as that was of all which has gone before. It has, then, like them, a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes most promotive of its own happiness; consequently, to accommodate to the circumstances in which it finds itself, that received from its predecessors. . . ." ²¹*

The utterance quoted above is the more remarkable as having been made only ten years before Jefferson's death, at a time in life when most men are definitely of a conservative frame of mind. But nothing during his long experience in public life had influenced him to depart in the least from his advocacy of the right of the governed to determine the form of government under which they should live.

* This theory has another aspect in our governmental practice. No Congress attempts to bind a future Congress. Of course in practice it is inevitable that many policies initiated by one Congress are left to be carried out by those who follow. And to the credit of Congress, it must be said that when plans running through many years are started, they are usually completed.

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This is the concept that prompted Woodrow Wilson's desire to build a new world on the basis of "self-determination." It is a doctrine which has been crushed under the heel of the dictators of present-day Europe, but it is not likely to die there. It will yet arise to bring freedom to those nations which have temporarily lost their national independence. This is the one thing that cannot change, the "inherent and unalienable rights" of man, and all America shares the faith of Jefferson that these rights must finally be established throughout the world.



7

Working Democracy (Continued)

WITH SELF-GOVERNMENT the polar star of Jefferson's philosophy, he would delegate to the people's chosen representatives only those powers which were necessary for the successful government of the group, lest too great a concentration of power might result in loss of civil liberties. He would keep simple all the machinery of administration, for fear it might become burdensome. The people should retain control over as many of their rights as possible. He could hardly foresee a condition such as that described by Lao Tze, where there are "aldermen and mayors who are possessed of power over men but would not use it."¹ He would not delegate any powers which he did not expect to be used. He would keep both legislative and executive officers conscious of the limits of their powers. He has stated this attitude in a very concise manner: "Our legislators are not sufficiently apprized of the rightful limits of their power; that their true office is to declare and enforce only our natural rights and duties, and to take none of them from us. No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another; and this is all from which the laws ought to restrain him; every man is under the natural duty of contributing to the necessities of

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the society; and this is all the laws should enforce on him; and, no man having a natural right to be the judge between himself and another, it is his natural duty to submit to the umpirage of an impartial third. When the laws have declared and enforced all this, they have fulfilled their function; and the idea is quite unfounded, that on entering into society we give up any natural right.”² To restrain from aggression, to enforce contribution for the general need, and to make possible submission of disputes to a third party—these duties of government are subject to varied interpretation, but there is no doubt that Jefferson would have them understood in their simplest sense.

He did not approve of the European governments which, he said, “deem it necessary to keep them [the people] down by hard labor, poverty and ignorance, and to take from them, as from bees, so much of their earnings, as that unremitting labor shall be necessary to obtain a sufficient surplus to sustain a scanty and miserable life.”³ He had no sympathy with the “organization of kings, nobles, and priests,” for “The trappings of such a machinery consume by their expense those earnings of industry they were meant to protect, and, by the inequalities they produce, expose liberty to sufferance.”⁴

Jefferson disagreed completely with Hobbes and Machiavelli in their contention that order in society could be obtained only by giving to the ruler absolute power over his subjects. He thought, rather, “that the people, being the only safe depository of power, should exercise in person every function which their qualifications enable them to exercise, consistently with the order and security of society. . . .”⁵ Only limited powers should be given to any ruler, and the power to withdraw even those should never be given up by the people. “Action by the citizens in person, in affairs

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within their reach and competence, and in all others by representatives, chosen immediately, and removable by themselves, constitutes the essence of a republic.”⁶

Jefferson’s hatred of every form of tyranny was evident in all his political activities and public utterances. He fully appreciated the “will to power” which so often determines the course of man’s actions. The power of all individuals and of all branches of government must be subjected to strict control to prevent tyranny and oppression. There are various means which can be employed by the people to limit the powers of those placed in office, and Jefferson would insist that none of these be overlooked. He considered centralization of power one of the greatest threats to liberty. His insistence that too great accumulation of power in one department of government was dangerous lay at the bottom of his conflict with Hamilton. In contrast to State and local units, the federal government should not be given too great powers; and the various branches of government, legislative, executive, and judicial, must not be allowed to intrude on one another’s jurisdiction. This distribution of powers and the jealousy among geographic units and among governmental departments must serve as instruments of control to prevent any attempt to form an oppressive government. Jefferson knew, as did Machiavelli, “that the people desire not to be domineered over or oppressed by the nobles, while the nobles desire to oppress and domineer over the people.” Machiavelli says that “from these two contrary appetites there arises in cities one of three results, a Princedom, or Liberty, or Licence.”⁷ Jefferson wished to make sure that this conflict between rulers and ruled would result in liberty. “What,” he asks, “has destroyed the liberty and the rights of man in every government which has ever existed under the sun?” And he answers, “The generalizing and concentrating

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all cares and powers into one body, no matter whether of the autocrats of Russia or France, or of the aristocrats of a Venetian Senate.”⁸ “Free government is founded in jealousy, and not in confidence; it is jealousy, and not confidence, which prescribes limited Constitutions, to bind down those whom we are obliged to trust with power.”⁹ If the three departments of our government “maintain their mutual independence of each other it may last long, but not so if either can assume the authorities of the other.”¹⁰

Jefferson’s theory of checks and balances may have had something to do with the fact that his was the age in which the Newtonian physics was having its greatest philosophical influence. It is interesting to speculate whether Jefferson would have accepted the ideas of Darwin, whose influence was to dominate the next great scientific era. I myself feel that the theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest would have harmonized with the thinking of this great individualist, who taught that liberty itself was the product of an age-old struggle and that it could be maintained only by unending strife and eternal vigilance. Yet Jefferson was also capable of appreciating the ideas of mutual aid and social co-operation which were also in advance of his age. Though he stressed the primacy of the individual, he was also aware of man’s social nature and of his dependence on his fellow men. Thus his program of education at public expense shows that he considered society responsible for providing opportunities to bring out the best in each individual and to improve his economic standards.

The power of removal from office is another means of control which the people must never relinquish. Permanence in office makes for disregard of the public will. Every office-holder must be subject to removal by means of frequent elections or reappointment, this being the one way of keep-

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ing him dependent upon the people. "It should be remembered," he says, "as an axiom of eternal truth in politics, that whatever power in any government is independent, is absolute also; in theory only, at first, while the spirit of the people is up, but in practice, as fast as that relaxes. Independence can be trusted nowhere but with the people in mass. They are inherently independent of all but moral law."¹¹ This danger inherent in the relaxation of "the spirit of the people" is a fact of age-old experience recognized also by the ancient Chinese. Thus we are told that "When the Grand Course was pursued . . . they chose men of talents, virtue, and ability [to rule them]. . . . Now that the Grand Course has fallen into disuse and obscurity, the kingdom is a family inheritance."¹²

It was this fear that permanence in office might finally result in a hereditary succession which was responsible for Jefferson's opposition to that lack in the Constitution of a provision making the President ineligible for re-election. "I dislike strongly the perpetual re-eligibility of the President. This, I fear, will make that an office for life, first, and then hereditary."¹³ This opposition to the re-eligibility of the President appears in all his early comments on the Constitution; yet he frequently qualified it by expressing the hope that the restriction he suggested would not be made applicable to Washington, whom he considered the one person able to hold the Union together and guide it through its formative period. By the end of his own first term as President, he had outgrown his fear that the Presidency might become an instrument of tyranny. While many of Jefferson's critics accuse him of inconsistency because of this change of attitude toward a second term for the President, this change is in fact entirely consistent with his basic attitude and characteristic of his whole political life.

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Jefferson was never one to be bound by precedent, let alone by his own former opinions on a particular point of practice. He had learned since the adoption of the Constitution that there was little, if any, danger of the American people's ever tolerating a usurpation of their powers by any President. "Seventeen distinct States," he says, "amalgamated into one as to their foreign concerns, but single and independent as to their internal administration, regularly organized with a legislature and governor resting on the choice of the people, and enlightened by a free press, can never be so fascinated by the arts of one man, as to submit voluntarily to his usurpation. Nor can they be constrained to it by any force he can possess."¹⁴

Of current interest is the fact that Jefferson not only gave us the anti-third-term political fiction, but that he also gave us the reasoning whereby a third term becomes permissible! Washington had served one term and wished to retire. It was Jefferson, above all others, who successfully urged him to present himself for re-election, using the argument that the union of the States was more important than any theory. Jefferson himself accepted Harrington's theory of rotation, that no man should succeed himself in office. The fact that the Constitution prescribed a definite term showed that the founders accepted the theory of limited service. Still, Jefferson pointed out to Washington, if the call were great enough he should listen to the call and not to the theory. Washington ran for a second term and was elected. His Farewell Address is always referred to as having fixed the two-term tradition. But in reality this is not the case. The second-term limit became a rule only after Washington's time. When the question of a third term was presented to Jefferson, he perceived that the same reasoning must be applied. In 1805 he wrote to John Taylor, "I had determined to declare my intention

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[not to run for a third term], but I have consented to be silent on the opinion of friends, who think it best not to put a continuance out of my power in defiance of all circumstances. There is, however, but one circumstance which could engage my acquiescence in another election; to wit, such a division about a successor, as might bring in a monarchist.”¹⁵ First things come first. The Union was the important thing, not a political theory. Here we have Jefferson at his best, namely in his ability to measure long-range values.

Jefferson thought that the members of the Senate were too long secured against those who elected them.¹⁶ He would have preferred to see them elected by the people and for a shorter period of time. He foresaw that the Senate might become the most powerful body in the government, an eventuality which he did not approve. On seeing the finished Constitution, Jefferson at once recognized one important fact about its possible operation which even the text-writers of this day still overlook: he appreciated the power of the Senate. The Senate of the United States is the only organ of the national government whose personnel has operated without a break since the Constitution was established, never undergoing a complete change since 1789. As soon as he knew that but one-third of the Senate was to change at any one time, Jefferson realized that this would make the Senate the center around which the government must revolve. And so it has worked out: that party which controls the Senate soon controls the government. It is in the Senate that Presidents are made and marred. The confirming power, the treaty power, the power of debate, the leadership in public opinion, the equality of State representation, the right of impeachment—all these powers bid well to make the Senate the continuing center of government.

It is one of the ironies of history that Jefferson, who saw

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and recognized the importance of this power and who did not approve of it, is responsible for increasing this outstanding influence on American political life. Jefferson's *Manual*, written while he was Vice President, is still used as the parliamentary guide in the Senate. To Jefferson must go the credit for the practice of unlimited debate and the rule of seeking unanimous consent for many of its decisions. The freedom of speaking on non-germane subjects and doing things out of order, by unanimous consent, has made the Senate one of the world's greatest forums. On any day, at twelve o'clock noon, for a few minutes, the country can be told of any injustice, any wrongdoing of the government. The prophets of ancient Israel had the right to rebuke the King; in the days of the Tsar a person might make himself an idiot for Christ's sake and walk into the royal presence and utter rebukes; but the Senate of the United States starts its order of business by calling for "Petitions and Memorials." The right of petition furnishes a basis for correcting injustice and abuse. At the opening of each session any Senator may speak out against any abuse of government or any other condition in the country with which he is in disagreement. The power of the Senate to check or further the aims of government cannot be measured. That it has never been measured or limited is a credit to the American people and their great government. Wise Presidents co-operate with the Senate. Unwise Presidents may assume this co-operation is not necessary; but upon studying their administrations, we discover that their programs have seldom been successfully carried to completion.

The rules of organization in the Senate do make it possible for the President to exercise some control over that body. This control does not come, as some glib speakers, columnists, and text-writers imagine, from his control over pa-

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cronage. What desire for patronage could influence a Senator if it meant that, through it, he himself might be controlled? Compare the right to name a judge or a collector with the right to stand up in the Senate and openly criticize the President of the United States. The real power of the Senate has at times been exploited but has seldom been discussed with appreciation. Jefferson, keen statesman that he was, foresaw it all.

No individual holding public office should be beyond the control of those whom he represents. The powers of every officeholder and of every department of government should be definitely limited. As we have already observed, these controls can be retained by constitutional limitation of powers and by frequent elections which make removal from office possible. The authors of the Constitution thought it wise to make one exception to the rule that all public officers should be subject to recall by means of election. The life tenure of federal judges represented an attempt to free them from the influence of pressure groups and from the threat of dismissal, thus making it possible for them to render their judgment without fear or favor. As time passed Jefferson decided that this feeling of security, coupled with the tendency of judges to assume the right to pass on the constitutionality of the laws legislated by the elected representatives of the people, was creating a real threat to liberty. His attitude toward the judiciary underwent a complete transformation between the time he became President and the time of his death. At first he thought, "The judges should hold estates for life in their offices, or, in other words, their commissions should be made during good behavior."¹⁷ In 1776 he wrote to George Wythe, "The judges should not be dependent upon any man, or body of men."¹⁸ But his experiences over a period of forty years had convinced him,

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by 1823, that even judges could not be trusted with too much power. In that year he wrote, "At the establishment of our Constitutions, the judiciary bodies were supposed to be the most helpless and harmless members of the government. Experience, however, soon showed in what way they were to become the most dangerous; that the insufficiency of the means provided for their removal gave them a freehold and irresponsibility in office; that their decisions, seeming to concern individual suitors only, pass silent and unheeded by the public at large; that these decisions, nevertheless, become law by precedent, sapping, by little and little, the foundations of the Constitution, and working its change by construction, before any one has perceived that the invisible and helpless worm has been busily employed in consuming its substance. In truth, man is not made to be trusted for life, if secured against all liability to account."¹⁹ Jefferson's fear of the consolidation of power and of the absence of control is evident in many such statements. "I cannot lay down my pen," he says, "without recurring to one of the subjects of my former letter, for in truth there is no danger I apprehend so much as the consolidation of our government by the noiseless, and therefore unalarming, instrumentality of the supreme court. This is the form in which federalism now arrays itself, and consolidation is the present principle of distinction between republicans and the pseudo-republicans but real federalists."²⁰

Several other statements from Jefferson on this subject seem worthy of recording here, as they so clearly illustrate his attitude on this important matter, which in recent years has been so much in the minds of the people of the country: "The Judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working under ground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric. They

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are construing our Constitution from a coordination of a general and special government to a general and supreme one alone. This will lay all things at their feet, and they are too well versed in English law to forget. . . . Having found from experience, that impeachment is an impracticable thing, a mere scare-crow, they consider themselves secure for life.”²¹ “The great object of my fear,” he says in another letter, “is the Federal Judiciary. That body, like gravity, ever acting, with noiseless foot, and unalarming advance, gaining ground step by step, and holding what it gains, is engulfing insidiously the special governments into the jaws of that which feeds them.”²² And again, “It is a very dangerous doctrine to consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions. It is one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy. . . . The Constitution has erected no such single tribunal, knowing that to whatever hands confided, with the corruptions of time and party, its members would become despots. It has more wisely made all the departments coequal and cosovereign within themselves.”²³

One final quotation on this subject will illustrate the method which Jefferson would have employed to counteract the tendency toward the increasing power of the judiciary. In a letter to William T. Barry, written in 1822, he says, “We already see the power, installed for life, responsible to no authority (for impeachment is not even a scare-crow), advancing with a noiseless and steady pace to the great object of consolidation. The foundations are already deeply laid by their decisions, for the annihilation of constitutional State rights, and the removal of every check, every counterpoise to the ingulphing power of which themselves are to make a sovereign part. . . . Let the future appointments of judges be for four or six years, and removable by the President and

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Senate. This will bring their conduct, at regular periods, under revision and probation, and may keep them in equipoise between the general and special governments. We have erred in this point, by copying England, where certainly it is a good thing to have the judges independent of the King. But we have omitted to copy their caution also, which makes a judge removable on the address of both legislative houses. That there should be public functionaries independent of the nation, whatever may be their demerit, is a solecism in a republic, of the first order of absurdity and inconsistency.”²⁴

This growing change in Jefferson’s attitude toward the judiciary is another example of his willingness to cast aside theories when, in his opinion, they failed to function in practice as he had expected they would. He was not bound by any preconceived notions; when he decided that some institution or theory was working against the good of the union, “which is the first and supreme law,”²⁵ he was willing to abandon it and substitute in its place something that would work for the general good. Hirst recognizes this important characteristic, when he says “... for the uncompromising idealist in theory was always moderated and controlled by the realist who sought the attainable, measuring with practiced eye times, seasons, and opportunities.”²⁶ The success of American democracy was made possible by the combining of high political idealism with sound, workable governmental practice.

In discussing Jefferson’s theories about the judiciary we must not forget that there were two Jeffersons when it came to the matter of courts. He was a lawyer and knew the law. He appreciated the need for courts and he understood their power and the consequent need for absolute honesty. Then, too, he was the leader of a great political party whose program was being opposed by the courts. We all admit, now,

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that the courts took unfair advantage of their power to have the last word, without proper restraint. It is also readily apparent that Jefferson, in contending for his political ends, knew how to argue with deadly effect in favor of his own point of view. We who have ourselves recently passed through a great political struggle over the Supreme Court know what occasions for controversy, polemic, and argument such a situation offers. But the mere necessities of debate aside, and regardless of the merits of the recent discussion, something must be said for Jefferson's sound political analysis. Life tenure for federal judges had not accomplished its purpose. Judges had been arbitrary. Some persisted in continuing in office even after they themselves realized their loss of efficiency. All sorts of retirement plans have been put into operation, with the result that we now have a class of officeholders who may retire on full pay for merely having served their time in office. The necessity of providing this inducement to retirement in order to overcome an undesirable situation is an indication that Jefferson was not mistaken when he foresaw the need of some greater control over the judiciary.

The evils against which Jefferson warned are still with us. The judges who used the Constitution to protect themselves from paying their share of income taxes, thus making themselves by their own decision a special tax-exempt class, descended to a level seldom reached by any officeholder in our government. The bankruptcy scandals in our American cities represent a type of immorality that can be characterized only by the term "advantage taking." Receivership favoritism has resulted in two impeachment trials, but from these the "advantage taking" judges have only realized how difficult it is to convict them, so they have taken no notice of the warning, and the victims of dishonest receiverships can-

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not be heard. Again, we have a "Lame Duck Amendment," which provides that men defeated for re-election shall not continue to represent the people in Congress, yet many of our highest judicial offices are given to men who have been repudiated by the people at an election. There is certainly something radically wrong when in a democracy such as ours the first requirement for elevation to the Supreme Court seems to be that the appointee be either a person who has never gone before the people for approval or one who has been repudiated by the people at an election! And there is something wrong when an appointing officer feels that a man who has been a county attorney is eligible for the high court, whereas a man who has spent a lifetime studying the law and writing about it is not, if he is not a lawyer. The founding fathers in their wisdom put no such qualification requirements into the Constitution. Nor are they responsible for the unsound practice by which no Senator is appointed to the Senate Judiciary Committee unless he is a lawyer—a high point in closed-shop mentality. If there is one phase of American government about which the people are uninformed, and therefore unconcerned, it is the courts. Hence Jefferson's warmth in discussing this subject and the soundness of his analysis of it.

Much as Jefferson feared centralization of power, he realized the need of a strong government and of prompt action by the executive under certain conditions. He thought that a republican form of government could function with precision and efficiency and still preserve its essential guarantees of freedom. "I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm, on the

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theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself?"²⁷ In time of stress, he was willing to permit a kind of executive freedom of action and independent direction which he would not have sanctioned under ordinary circumstances. During such an emergency, one very like our own today, he wrote, "I do not know whether I am able at present to form a just idea of the situation of our country. If I am, it is such as, during the *bellum omnium in omnia* of Europe, will require the union of all its friends to resist its enemies within and without. If we schismatize on either men or measures, if we do not act in phalanx, as when we rescued it from the satellites of monarchism, I will not say our *party*, the term is false and degrading, but our *nation* will be undone. . . . The last hope of human liberty in this world rests on us. We ought, for so dear a state, to sacrifice every attachment and every enmity. Leave the President free to choose his own coadjutors, to pursue his own measures, and support him and them, even if we think we are wiser than they, honester than they are, or possessing more enlarged information of the state of things. If we move in mass, be it ever so circuitously, we shall attain our object; but if we break into squads, every one pursuing the path he thinks most direct, we become an easy conquest to those who can now barely hold us in check. I repeat again, that we ought not to schismatize on either men or measures. Principles alone can justify that."²⁸

This statement, asking almost unlimited powers for the President, hardly sounds like Jefferson, yet it is typical of the practical Jefferson, who was willing to make every other consideration secondary to the welfare of the nation. He boldly faced the problems this gave rise to. "The question you propose, whether circumstances do not sometimes occur,

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which make it a duty in officers of high trust, to assume authorities beyond the law, is easy of solution in principle, but sometimes embarrassing in practice. A strict observance of the written laws is doubtless *one* of the high duties of a good citizen, but it is not *the highest*. The laws of necessity, of self-preservation, of saving our country when in danger, are of higher obligation. To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to written law, would be to lose the law itself, with life, liberty, property and all those who are enjoying them with us; thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means.”²⁹ Jefferson’s action in authorizing the Louisiana Purchase is a concrete example of the application of the theory expressed in the foregoing statement. He realized that his first concern as President should be the welfare of his country and the people. For the good of the nation he would purchase Louisiana, even though the money paid for the territory went to the aggressor, Napoleon. Though condemning every act of Bonaparte, he put into the hands of the despoiler of Europe the means to make further depredations possible.

All attempts at republican government must necessarily fail unless the voters recognize, without question, the right of the majority to determine governmental policy. “The first principle of republicanism,” says Jefferson, “is that the *lex majoris partis* is the fundamental law of every society of individuals of equal rights; to consider the will of the society enounced by the majority of a single vote as sacred as if unanimous, is the first of all lessons in importance, yet the last which is thoroughly learnt. This law once disregarded, no other remains but that of force, which ends necessarily in military despotism.”³⁰ Americans need only look at the history of some of their neighboring republics to realize how sound was Jefferson’s estimate of the importance for sta-

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bility and security of recognizing the will of the majority, as expressed by means of the ballot, as the law for all. Jefferson himself says, "I readily suppose my opinion wrong, when opposed by the majority."³¹ Such a faith in the decision of the majority of voters is absolutely essential to the working of any government based on the expression of the public will. In a response to the citizens of his home county, delivered on his return from France, Jefferson made one of his best statements on this subject: "We have been fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers; and Heaven has rewarded us with a happy issue from our struggles. It rests now with ourselves alone to enjoy in peace and concord the blessings of self-government, so long denied to mankind; to show by example the sufficiency of human reason for the care of human affairs; and that the will of the majority—the natural law of every society—is the only sure guardian of the rights of man. Perhaps even this may sometimes err; but its errors are honest, solitary and short-lived. Let us then, my dear friends, forever bow down to the general reason of the society. We are safe with that, even in its deviations, for it soon returns again to the right way."³²

Lest we lose the world citizen, in which aspect of Jefferson we are chiefly concerned, in the propounder of fundamental American political doctrine, I should like to call the reader's attention again to the phrase "the will of the majority—the natural law of every society." Jefferson felt that he was expounding a political principle of universal validity. He was putting into Western eighteenth-century form an ancient idea that the Chinese sage Mencius had expressed in his fashion: "Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear."

To complete the working democracy, every member of society must feel duty bound to assume responsibility in gov-

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ernment in case his fellow citizens wish to call him to service. Jefferson's entire life was an excellent example of one who served against his own desires and inclination. He was willing to sacrifice the association of his family and his business interests to answer the call to serve in many important public offices. He often said that his own preference would have taken him back to his home at Monticello, where he could enjoy his family, his books, and his work on the farm. As far as he was concerned, "Were happiness the only legitimate object, the public councils would be deserted."³³ For him, "Public employment contributes neither to advantage nor happiness. It is but honorable exile from one's family and affairs."³⁴ He had "no motive to public service but the public satisfaction."³⁵ As early as 1793, after which he was elected to the office of Vice President once and President twice, he felt that he had rendered his due share of service to his fellows. His statement on resigning as Secretary of State expresses his concept of public duty: "To my fellow-citizens the debt of service has been fully and faithfully paid. I acknowledge that such debts exist, that a tour of duty, in whatever line he can be most useful to his country, is due from every individual. It is not easy perhaps to say of what length exactly this tour should be, but we may safely say of what length it should not be. Not of our whole life, for instance, for that would be to be born a slave,—not even of a very large portion of it. I have now been in the public service four and twenty years; one half of which has been spent in total occupation with their affairs, and absence from my own. I have served my tour, then."³⁶ In the face of this statement, he nevertheless returned to serve his country for twelve more eventful years.

In summary, then, we see Jeffersonian democracy as a society of free individuals, equal before the law, delegating

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limited powers to rulers of their own choosing, controlling the actions of their public servants by constitutional limitations and frequent elections, distributing the functions of government among various departments and geographical units, accepting the will of the majority in all things, every member of the group ready to respond to the call of his fellow citizens to serve in public office. Such a government, Jefferson thought, could preserve the liberty of the individual, protect every person from the aggression of his fellows, and supervise such group action as is necessary for the protection and general welfare of society.* The detail of the operation of this system must be left to each group and to each generation to decide. With these fundamentals as the foundation, any desirable superstructure which fits the needs of a given group may be worked out.

No one realized better than Jefferson that there were many peoples not yet ready to adopt any such system of govern-

* Sydney Strong in his small but exceedingly inspirational book, *American Prophets*, quotes Jefferson as follows, picturing for us his concept of a true democracy functioning:

"[I] know of no safe depositary of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesale discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education.

"The people are the censors of their governments; and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. To punish these errors too severely would be to suppress the only safeguard of the public liberty.

"With all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow-citizens—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government."

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ment. Still, he hoped that the time would come when the liberties he so prized would be accessible to every nation. He could see no other means of bringing happiness to the people of the world, for to him there could be no happiness without liberty.

For one hundred and fifty years this system has been on trial in America. With a population made up of immigrants from every country on the globe, it has undergone this trial under conditions which have tested it as in a fiery furnace. It has emerged triumphant. We offer it to the world, the gift of America, through our greatest democrat, Thomas Jefferson.



8

Jeffersonian Freedom

WHEN WOODROW WILSON created the slogan, "make the world safe for democracy," he referred to a struggle which has been going on throughout the ages * and not merely one

* I mean this literally. As scholars unfold for us more of the origins of the ancient world, we discover how very old this struggle is. We see, too, where the conflict lay. In addition we see how, as men put their faith in law, the concept of liberty burst forth and legislated as a guarantee the freedom from arbitrary caprice. That our land was to be one of law and not of men has a new meaning when we examine the idea in the light of one of the earliest struggles between an individual right and a single will. In the ancient world of the Near East with its Code of Hammurabi and in the ancient world of the Far East with its Code of Shun, we find the beginnings of the struggle for the protection of private rights. Those peoples who were influenced by these two great codes moved on toward the beginnings of the concepts of liberty and freedom. Through law and especially through the written contract came private property rights. The great civilizations of ancient China kept that mighty empire on a private property basis. The civilizations of Mesopotamia influenced the Hebrew. Hammurabi laid down the rule that a purchase without written document was a theft and was punishable by death. When we come down to the conflict in thought between the Hebrew and the Egyptian we discover many of the elements of the contest today between the theories of the single-will states and the democracies. In the later conflict between theories of China and Japan the same ele-

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taking place from 1914 to 1918—an eternal struggle for that democracy which would permit the freed man to come and go, to have and to hold, to buy and to sell, to marry whom he wished, and to say what he thought; in other words, the attainment of the free agency of man. Democracy, in this sense, has never been more than a passing phase of history anywhere; it has never been safe for any long period.

The ancients dreamed dreams, and saw visions of a free man. In Greece this free man for a while blossomed forth to produce a civilization, a culture, a beauty, the like of which the world has never duplicated. Still, no Greek thinker could conceive of an organized society without slaves, and the concept of the "slave by nature" was developed to justify this weakness in his society and to put a limit on the freedom of Greece. The underlying philosophy, which made a free society desirable for the free man, was not applied to man in general; the freedom of one class of society was based on the servitude of another. It was therefore but the semblance of freedom, for bondage lay constantly in its shadow. Yet a few men felt the uplift of individual liberty and the spirit of these free men has never died.

ments are found. The Japanese state was one wherein the Mikado was law; he owned the land and could do with it as he saw fit. He ruled in theory by caprice. This was condemned by the code-influenced, private-property-respecting Chinese. The Hebrews could not stand the unrestrained power of the ancient rulers of Egypt, who had complete power of life and death over all. Thus we can say that more and more scholars of the ancient world are recognizing the very early beginning of this great conflict. The American concept of liberty, with its many freedoms and various permissible loyalties, is a result of long development. After what has just been said, the Liberty Bell quotation taken from Leviticus 25:10, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," may have for us a deeper meaning.

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Had the social and political significance of Jesus's teachings of the worth of the individual soul borne its fruit in the practice of the Church, the world might long ago have seen a lasting free society. For Jesus, all men were brothers and equally precious in the sight of God, their Father. Jew and Gentile, bond and free, black and white, each was free to work out his own salvation. In the realm of the spirit the early Christian philosophy exalted the individual, giving him freedom to choose and to "bear testimony." Yet in the face of the injunction that "ye shall call no man master," the Church left man in bondage and, indeed, sanctioned physical slavery. And out of this same acquiescence grew intolerance, the terrors of the Inquisition, heresy hunting, and the burning of witches. The Christian philosophy, while propounding a doctrine of freedom, became the very instrument of oppression.

The torch of freedom has often been lighted; it has burned brightly for brief periods. The flame has often burned low, sometimes flickered, but has never been quite extinguished. Always again it has been raised, here in the cause of religious liberty, there in the cause of political freedom. It remained for the founders of the American republic to plan a society wherein all phases of freedom, of religion, of speech, and of person, should become a reality. And Thomas Jefferson, as the embodiment of the spirit of Americanism, combining in himself the zeal of all the past apostles of freedom, thus becomes one of the world's great leaders in man's ancient quest. Because he gathered together the aspirations of all the fighters for freedom who had gone before, all phases of liberty were equally important to him. Building upon the foundation laid throughout all past ages, he became America's first world citizen.

For Jefferson was both a free agent and a responsible one,

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inherently capable of enjoying and exercising the four great freedoms in which society should protect him: freedom of mind, freedom of soul, freedom of body, and freedom of property. These freedoms were God-given; they could not justly be taken from any man; they were "natural rights." Many a man has accepted the philosophy of freedom; few have been willing to fight for it in all its forms, as was Jefferson. His enthusiasm for freedom, born of his western environment, fired by the eloquence of Patrick Henry, and matured in his sound religious philosophy, never waned to his dying day. To him freedom was the most precious of all man's possessions; without it life had no meaning. No physical comforts could compensate for slavery; no social security could take the place of political liberty; no promise of eternal bliss could justify a dictated faith. The attainment of freedom would justify every sacrifice of which man was capable. No price was too high to pay for such a reward.

Jefferson's theory of freedom grows naturally out of his conviction that all men are created equal. All individuals possess equal natural rights; no one can justly claim authority to control another. Only society as a whole can claim such authority; and certain liberties cannot properly be taken from the individual even by the majority of his fellows. In his first draft of the Declaration of Independence, we see clearly how Jefferson reasoned from the idea of equality to that of freedom.* Equal men must be free men.

* Jefferson placed as the first of the "self-evident truths" to which he appealed the fact that "All men are created equal," thus laying even more stress on equality than on liberty itself, a relative emphasis made still more striking in his original draft by the clause that followed: "and from that equal creation they derive rights inherent and unalienable, among which are the preservation of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson's recognition of equality as the more inclusive concept upon which that of liberty depends was

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Man might be happy while limiting his own activities, as in the case of the society of Lao Tze, but once his activities are limited by force, without his consent, he is no longer happy. Man might serve for a lifetime in happiness, but force him to serve and happiness is no longer possible.

Jefferson's efforts in behalf of liberty extended over the entire period of his public service. Even after his retirement, he continued to champion, by means of numerous letters to his friends, the cause of freedom. He never feared the consequences of personal freedom. He much preferred some of the consequences of this freedom, which his contemporaries feared, to the curtailment of any essential liberties. Jefferson never referred to the so-called "four freedoms" as such, but his many statements on this subject do revolve about certain very definite concepts of what freedoms are basic. He was in France when the Constitution was promulgated and, on learning of the details of that document, he wrote many letters to his friends in America in which he commented on what he considered its most important weakness. In these letters he repeatedly enumerated the items which he considered important in a proposed bill of rights. In a letter to C. W. F. Dumas, he says that the people of Virginia will probably reject the Constitution until there is annexed a bill

philosophically sound and was absolutely fundamental to a democratic interpretation of liberty. It is evident that if all men are equal no one of them can control another, whereas, without such equality, "Liberty for the pike is death for the minnow," as R. H. Tawney remarked. When Jefferson's more conservative colleagues struck out the six words, "from that equal creation they derive," and substituted the high-sounding phrase, "they are endowed by their Creator with," they broke the all-important connection between liberty and equality, separated the former from the condition of its universal attainment, and paved the way for the nineteenth-century laissez-faire degradation of liberty which virtually made it equivalent, during the age of the industrial robber barons, to the right of the strongest.¹

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of rights "wherein the government shall declare that, 1. Religion shall be free. 2. Printing presses free. 3. Trials by jury preserved in all cases. 4. No monopolies in commerce. 5. No standing army."² In a letter to A. Donald, he says, "By a declaration of rights I mean one which shall stipulate freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of commerce against monopolies, trial by juries in all cases, no suspensions of the *habeas corpus*, no standing armies. These are fetters against doing evil which no honest government should decline."³ "A bill of rights," he says in a letter to Madison, "is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular; and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inferences."⁴

Jefferson, being in France, took no part in the drafting of the Constitution, yet it is probable that he was to a considerable extent responsible for the first amendments which included the bill of rights. In a letter to Dr. Joseph Priestley, written in 1802, he says, "One passage in the paper you enclosed me must be corrected. It is the following: 'And all say it was yourself more than any other individual that planned and established the Constitution.' I was in Europe when the Constitution was planned, and never saw it till after it was established. On receiving it, I wrote strongly to Mr. Madison, urging the want of provision for the freedom of religion, freedom of the press, trial by jury, *habeas corpus*, and substitution of militia for a standing army, and an express reservation to the State of all rights not specifically granted to the Union. He accordingly moved in the first session of Congress for these amendments, which were agreed to and ratified by the States as they now stand. This is all the hand I had in what related to the Constitution."⁵ If Jefferson was responsible for the introduction of the first ten amendments to the Constitution, he has rendered a

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service to humanity which alone would make him immortal.

Jefferson is, of course, literally correct when he says that he had no hand in drafting the Constitution, for he was not even present at the convention which did that work. But Priestley is also probably partly correct when he says that it was Jefferson more than anyone else who planned and established it. Such a step was discussed many times before Jefferson left for France, and his opinion on the matter was eagerly sought by his friends. In a letter to James Madison, written in 1786, he points out the need of making the nation one in foreign concerns but keeping it distinct in domestic ones. This he says gives the proper division of powers between the general and particular governments. He also points out in the same letter the need of maintaining three distinct branches of government, the legislative, executive, and judicial. He laid down, here, the essence of the federal system which has been recognized as the outstanding contribution of America to political science and the art of government. While Jefferson need not be credited with originating the federal idea, it would be unfair to him to rob him of due honor for the contribution he did make.

It is true that Jefferson, because of the absence of a bill of rights, was not enthusiastic about the Constitution when he first learned its exact provisions. But he always supported it and came to be one of its most stanch defenders. He must be given full credit as one who helped to create that spirit of reverence for the Constitution and the founding fathers which is still manifest in the United States.

In one edition of De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, published during the Civil War, the foreword contains the statement that, although democracy was then coming to an end in America, De Tocqueville's book would still carry great interest and remain an invaluable description of the

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American attempt at democracy as long as it had lasted.

"The present edition of this work is published at a time when the attention of the civilized world is powerfully attracted to the political institutions and social condition of the United States of America. Had M. de Tocqueville lived to witness the disruption of the great Confederation which he visited and described in the days of its greatest prosperity —had he lived to see the one stately fabric of Republican government overthrown by the calamities of civil war—he would have mourned over the destruction of another of the noblest experiments ever made in human society, and he would have regarded the present contest as a revolution of evil import to the future freedom of the world. . . . It may be that the institutions described in these volumes are already things of the past, and that the span of a single life, extended rather beyond the common duration of human existence, will include the rise and the fall of the great Commonwealth which has spread in our days across the continent of North America; but the principles on which these institutions rested are imperishable, and the destinies of the American people will yet be fulfilled." (Introductory Notice by the Translator, pages 39-40.)

The writer of this foreword, like so many others today, could not appreciate the permanence of the broad democratic values contained in our Constitution. In fact, the writer failed, as so many others have, to realize that both the South and the North were fighting for the very rights which they saw guaranteed to them in that great document. The Civil War brought amendments but not the destruction of the Constitution. The South, in writing a Constitution for the Confederacy, built its own union upon the Constitution, merely emphasizing its own interpretation.

The Constitution is now the oldest operative document of

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its kind in the world, and it contains the techniques essential to an orderly control by law of processes necessary "to make us one as to foreign concerns but keep us distinct as to domestic ones." Through this idea of federation, democracy may be made as broad as the whole earth; and Jefferson and his associates who thought through this idea become giants in the science of politics and the art of government when compared with the political thinkers of any other time or place. Jefferson himself thought this idea of federation and the method of federal representation were the two great contributions of America to the structure of government. Under such a system a government need have no particular bounds. Compare such an idea with that of the mighty Aristotle who supposed that no nation could be successfully governed if the extreme parts were not close enough together so that an attack on one could be known immediately in the other.

The three most important ideas which contribute to the possibility of a world federation are the idea of freedom of the individual, as translated politically into local self-government, the idea of progress, and the idea that man is by nature good. All three were fundamental in Jefferson's philosophy. When the world federation is finally realized, Jefferson will therefore find a great and important place as one of its spiritual founders. The tendency toward larger units is world-wide. It is equally manifest in conquest and in voluntary co-operation. A new idea is abroad in the world, an idea which will persist and will not down. American democracy offers a tested plan which can, at the will of the world, be made to serve mankind.

It is interesting to note that Jefferson always places religious freedom first on his list of desirable freedoms. Millions of Americans agree with him that the right to believe

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and to worship as one pleases is the most important single guarantee granted by the Constitution. America owes this great freedom to Jefferson more than to any other man. His fight for religious liberty was carried on in the face of determined opposition by an established church, backed by the power of the British government. He braved the disapproval of the entire clergy of his day and of many of his personal friends. Yet he did not waver until the right of free worship was written into the organic law of his own State and of the United States. Speaking of the Bill to Establish Religious Freedom in Virginia, Hirst says, "The first law ever passed by a popular Assembly giving perfect freedom of conscience places its author among the great liberators of mankind."⁶ Kean, commenting on the same document, has this to say: "The Virginia Bill of Rights (1776) and the Statute of Religious Liberty were the first formal sovereign declarations of their kind in Christendom. They struck the keynote of modern progress towards real freedom of religious opinion—the sovereign right in each individual *man* to regulate his faith and his religious associations according to the dictates of his own conscience. It was not 'toleration' but freedom of belief, absolute and universal, first then made a fundamental law, under which no form of persecution could be possible."⁷

Well might this bill, as P. L. Ford says, be ranked by Jefferson with the Declaration of Independence. It is well worth quotation in its entirety:

"A BILL FOR ESTABLISHING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

"Section I. Well aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds; that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested His supreme

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will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint: that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to exalt it by its influence on reason alone: that the impious presumption of legislature and ruler, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness; and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporary rewards, which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labors for the instruction of mankind, that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry; and therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to office of trust or emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injudiciously

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of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing with a monopoly of worldly honors and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed these are criminals who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous fallacy which at once destroys all religious liberty, because, he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless, by human interposition, disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them:

"Sect. II. We, the General Assembly of Virginia, do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in

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matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

"Sect. III. And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that, therefore, to declare this act to be irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operations, such act will be an infringement of natural right."⁸

This bill, written by Jefferson in 1779, was not passed by the Assembly until 1786, and then with some changes. Both an argument for and a declaration of religious liberty, it is the forerunner of all the reasoning employed by Mill in his classic *Essay on Liberty*. It is unanswerable. Without doubt it is the world's greatest official declaration on religious liberty. It opposed the entire spirit and practice of its time, which followed more closely the advice of Machiavelli that "matters should be so ordered that when men no longer believe of their own accord, they may be compelled to believe by force."⁹ But to Jefferson, "A church is 'a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him and effectual to the salvation of their souls.' It is *voluntary*, because no man is by *nature* bound to any church. The hope of salvation is the cause of his entering into it. If he find anything wrong in it, he should be as free to go out as he was to come in."¹⁰

Jefferson spared no effort to insure complete freedom of worship and complete separation of church and state. When in 1808, as President of the United States, he was asked to

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promulgate a general fast day, he protested that the government was prohibited by the Constitution from intermeddling in religious institutions. He had no authority to prescribe any religious exercise and did not care to assume such authority, even indirectly. He said that those not conforming to his proclamation would be punished by public sentiment, which punishment would come indirectly from a power having no right to interfere in religious matters. The government should not be invested with power of "effecting any uniformity of time or matter" among religious organizations. Each religious group should determine the time of its exercises. Civil powers alone have been given to the President, and he has no authority to direct any religious exercise.¹¹

Throughout his life, Jefferson firmly maintained his faith in this fundamental doctrine of religious freedom. It was closely connected in his mind with the equally important ideas of freedom of speech and of the press. Not only must everyone be left to believe as he pleases, but also he must not be prevented from speaking in support of his beliefs or of publishing them in written form. He had full faith in the thesis so ably developed later by Mill: truth is great and needs only the opportunity to answer and conquer error. He placed liberty above every other consideration and made religious freedom a reality. Adams calls attention to the importance which Jefferson attached to his work of making religious freedom possible, when he says, "In listing his achievements for the inscription on his tombstone . . . he set down only the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the founding of the University of Virginia. In other words, he placed above all else his achievements as a great liberal. Compared with what he had endeavored to do in freeing the human

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spirit, he considered of no account the political offices he had held. Few, if any, other statesmen who had held positions comparable to Governor, Minister to France, Secretary of State, Vice-President, and twice President of the United States, would have obliterated these from his record as Jefferson did. . . . We may say, though he would not, that his has been the greatest and most influential liberal mind that America has developed.”¹²

The freedom of the individual to believe and to worship was a great milestone in human progress. It brought about recognition in law of religious toleration. We must not fail to realize that it also guarantees the free existence of religious organizations. Thus, freedom of religion becomes also freedom for religion. The church, which occupied a place protected in law and custom and derived benefits directly from the state, feared for its welfare as a result of Jefferson’s campaign for religious freedom. But it has not been injured. Freedom for the church has worked for its benefit.

Within the past two centuries, the Christian world has passed through the stages of persecution, forbearance, and toleration. So completely different have these three Christian worlds been that one living today, accepting the idea of freedom of religion and freedom for religion, cannot understand the mental attitude of his forefathers who thought they pleased God by burning at the stake those whose beliefs did not conform to the accepted pattern.

But we still have far to go. Legally we can go no farther, but those who follow us and accept the idea of *appreciating* religious concepts differing from their own, will think of our toleration much as we now consider the persecution and forbearance of our forefathers. If it is possible, within a period of two hundred years, to pass through the stages of religious persecution, forbearance, and toleration and emerge

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into the era of religious appreciation which is now dawning, without in the least injuring anyone's beliefs or any church, can we not hold out the same hope for ultimate political freedom?

Will not the same key which unlocked the door to religious liberty also unlock the door to political liberty? It was the realization that burning heretics and persecuting unbelievers was wrong that brought about the discontinuance of these practices. The church did not change its ways as a result of expediency. So, too, the realization of the immorality, the downright evil, of the fundamental philosophy of the single-will state will bring about its downfall; its doom lies in the evil of the idea that men should be compelled by force to accept certain political ideas, to do what they are ordered to do, to believe only "what is for their best good," to see only what they are allowed to see, and to hear only what it is deemed wise for them to hear. When once men within the single-will state realize the immorality of the lives they are forced to live, they will rebel and strike down the evil which binds them. When the fight becomes definitely one between right and wrong, men will unite to destroy the defenders of the single will.

Freedom of speech and of the press go hand-in-hand to make possible a workable democracy. Only through the guarantee of such liberties can the voice of the people make itself heard in the control of those elected to power. Only by safeguarding these rights can the people be assured that the issues of government and public welfare will be examined and clarified. Only where free discussion is permitted can the people expect to reach sound conclusions in regard to issues of importance. Whenever the public will is the guide of public policy, free speech and a free press alone can assure sound government. When "The will of the

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people is the only legitimate foundation of any government . . . to protect its free expression should be our first object.”¹³

Jefferson was as much concerned about stable government as was Hobbes, but he could not agree with the latter’s dictum, “. . . it is annexed to the Sovereignty, to be Judge of what Opinions and Doctrines are averse, and what conducing to Peace; and consequently, on what occasions, how farre, and what, men are to be trusted withall, in speaking to Multitudes of people; and who shall examine the Doctrines of all bookes before they be published.”¹⁴ Jefferson’s championing of complete freedom of speaking and writing is largely responsible for the contempt in which Americans today hold those dictators who can attain their ends only by means of a controlled press and the suppression of free speech. His sincere faith in the wisdom of the people and in the final triumph of truth made him unafraid of free discussion. Unrestricted discussion may cause unrest, discontent, even social revolution, but the end result of such discussion is always good. “In every country where man is free to think and to speak,” he says, “differences of opinion will arise from difference of perception, and the imperfection of reason; but these differences when permitted, as in this happy country, to purify themselves by free discussion, are but as passing clouds overspreading our land transiently, and leaving our horizon more bright and serene.”¹⁵

The only security for the subjects of any government is the freedom of expression. When that precious right has been taken away, there is no power that can stay the heavy hand of oppression. Suppression of speech and the press must precede any successful attempt at misgovernment or oppression. “No government,” says Jefferson, “ought to be without censors; and where the press is free, no one ever

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will.”¹⁶ “The force of public opinion cannot be resisted, when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure.”¹⁷ Without a free press there can be no popular government. “The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.”¹⁸

Jefferson had abundant opportunity to prove his uncompromising faith in this doctrine of freedom of speech and of the press. In his various public offices, as Secretary of State, Vice President, and President, he was in a position to exert his influence to suppress the voice of those opposed to him and his friends. He was often urged by those about him to take such measures; yet, regardless of the nature of the attacks against him or those associated with him, he always defended the right of his enemies to give free expression to their opinions. Even when he was the object of the bitterest and most calumnious attacks, he did not give way to the temptation to use his power to restrain those who attacked him. “The attempt . . . to restrain the liberty of our citizens meeting together, interchanging sentiments on what subjects they please, and stating their sentiments in the public papers,” he says, “has come upon us a full century earlier than I expected. To demand the censors of public measures to be given up for punishment, is to renew the demand of the wolves in the fable that the sheep should give up their dogs as hostages of the peace and confidence established between them.”¹⁹ He says, further, that he was “for freedom of the press and against all violations of the constitution to

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silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.”²⁰

There were no circumstances which might justify any attempt to stifle the freedom of speech. A statement made in 1808 to the Republicans of Philadelphia shows to what lengths Jefferson was willing to go in defense of this principle. “It is to be lamented that any of our citizens, not thinking with the mass of the nation as to the principles of our government, or of its administration, and seeing all its proceedings with a prejudiced eye, should so misconceive and misrepresent our situation as to encourage aggressions from foreign nations. Our expectation is, that their distempered views will be understood by others as they are by ourselves; but should wars be the consequence of these delusions, and the errors of our dissatisfied citizens find atonement only in the blood of their sounder brethren, we must meet it as an evil necessarily flowing from that liberty of speaking and writing which guards our other liberties.”²¹ This is a strong statement: even the avoidance of war cannot justify the suppression of free speech. Why should a nation avoid war by losing the very liberties for which it has been willing to fight? Peace without the civil liberties which the Constitution guarantees is not a peace worthy of America. The freedoms for which Jefferson stood should not be forgotten. America must not attempt to abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, either by the passage of restrictive laws or by the condemnation of public opinion. If she loses these freedoms, even while winning a war, what has she gained? If we cast away the fundamental values of democracy, why sacrifice to save ourselves from those who would only take them from us in another way? We must preserve our freedom at home, even in the face of every

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threat from abroad. As Jefferson said, "If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union, or to change its republican form, let them stand, undisturbed, as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."²²

In many of his statements on this subject of freedom, Jefferson linked "person and property." "The true foundation of republican government," he says, "is the equal right of every citizen, in his person and property, and in their management."²³ Again he says, "The first foundations of the social compact would be broken up, were we definitely to refuse to its members the protection of their persons and property, while in their lawful pursuits."²⁴ Freedom of each person to go and come as he pleases, as long as he does not infringe upon the right of others to do the same, is a natural right which cannot be taken away, any more than can the right to think and to speak. It is the function of government to guarantee to every individual this right, to protect him from all restriction of movement, from all forms of unjust punishment, from prolonged imprisonment without trial, from repeated trial for the same offense. "Under the law of nature, all men are born free, every one comes into the world with a right to his own person, which includes the liberty of moving and using it at his own will. This is what is called personal liberty, and is given him by the Author of nature, because necessary for his own sustenance."²⁵ The government should insure the individual every possible protection in this personal liberty. Governments have always been inclined to invade the personal rights of citizens, but such an interference should be scrupulously guarded against in America. The individual must be protected in his personal freedom against every other individual or organization which might be able to deprive him of his liberty. No

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organization should be allowed to take from a citizen the right to find employment, to move from one job to another, to cease work. In the solution of a multitude of problems of the present day, this fundamental doctrine of personal liberty must be our guide.

The right of property is founded in the natural needs of man; it is the means by which he is able to insure his own well-being. Hobbes has pointed out that in a state of nature, without society, every man has the "right" to everything. But, as social organization progresses, the right of particular individuals to a well-defined portion of the general property becomes recognized. "Stable ownership," as Jefferson says, "is the gift of social law, and is given late in the progress of society."²⁶

Jefferson here sees what so few even in this day recognize, that the "isms" of today which result in the single-will control of men, property, and loyalties are reverisons to the old order and not harbingers of a new. The American and French Revolutions created a *novus ordo seclorum*, for they were revolutions against class and privilege and for freedom and equality of opportunity. The single-will movements were counter-revolutions against the American and French ideas because they robbed man of personal liberty and property and entrenched both class and privilege and forced inequality of opportunity.

Modern society being based on the accepted idea of personal property, it is the function of government to protect its citizens, equally, in these rights. Government shall not take private property without "due process of law." Neither shall "moneyed corporations" be allowed to obtain a monopoly on the property of the community. No laws of inheritance must be allowed to create a propertied and a propertyless class.

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Freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press, personal freedom, and economic freedom: these in the broad sense are the freedoms for which Jefferson stood. These are the freedoms on which America has risen to power in the world. These are the freedoms which the dictators must take from their subjects to make themselves secure in their positions of usurpation. These are the freedoms which must not be allowed to perish. They alone are worthy the defensive efforts of the world's democracies. As long as they remain, man will be able to look to the future with hope.

The world is full of the spirit of pessimism and a dull resignation to defeat. The reason is clear. Never in the last two thousand years of the world's history has there been such a complete repudiation of the idea that right and wrong should govern the lives and acts of men. Even the churches seem to have become victims of the power of the single-will masters. The sordid life of Cicero's *proletarius*, who did nothing for the state but produce children for the armies, seems to have become a satisfactory standard of life for both men and women in many states. Thus men are placed on a level with the animals, and there seems to be no one to tell them that such a condition is insulting to the concept of man and offensive in the sight of God. The world stands in need of new Jeffersons to give renewed vitality to the concept of freedom. May they soon appear! America's mission is to produce such men.



9

The Theory of Revolution

THE RIGHT OF revolution, the right of the governed to overthrow or renounce one government and institute another, has been recognized openly since the earliest days of our history. The right of the thirteen Colonies to declare themselves free, to replace the government of the mother country with one of their own making, is the very meaning of the Declaration of Independence. After independence had been attained, the framers of our Constitution showed that they had no fear of the theory or the actuality of revolution. The working model which they set up put into effect the right of the governed to overthrow the government periodically and to replace it by one more to their liking. There is in our governmental scheme an actual incorporation of the theory of revolution in our two-year, four-year, and six-year terms of office prescribed by the Constitution.

It was the intention of the framers of the Constitution that such revolutions be carried out peacefully. Or, as the text-writers put it, they substituted ballots for bullets. The right of revolution was thus maintained, but the method of accomplishing it was carefully prescribed. Article V of the Constitution, which provides methods for amendment, again

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recognizes the right but also prescribes a peaceful process. Since the great case of *Marbury versus Madison*, wherein the Supreme Court assumed the powers of judicial review, another method of maintaining the right of revolution has been open to the people of our country, that of overcoming the overbearing force of government by litigation. Moreover, it should also be remembered that Jefferson's opposition to a standing army, and the article written into the Constitution about limitations on appropriations for the army, are both based on the fear that this right of revolution might be forcibly taken away from the people.

The oft-repeated principle that government should be of law and not of men, as expressed in the Massachusetts State Constitution, is quite as much related to the right of revolution as it is to the peaceful process of deliberation; it stands opposed to direct action by leaders of minorities backed by force. In each step of the democratic process there is implied the right of the American people to make changes in their government: free expression, deliberation, action only after measuring the weight of opinion, acceptance of the majority will by the minority, then the protection of the minority despite the overruling of its will. There is restraint in every step, but it is precisely of a nature to make force unnecessary in the achievement of the people's will. Force, of course, is present in the American governmental scheme, as it must be present in every government, but it is a force which demands respect because it represents the majority will, rather than a minor group.

The unrestricted possibility of removal and replacement is an open acknowledgment of the right of the people to overthrow any existing government. The substitution of ballots for bullets makes the process peaceful, but it in no way alters the actuality of a political revolution. The Ameri-

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can people today frown on any revolutionary movement which does not advocate peaceful change, yet theoretically the right of revolution even by force has rarely been denied. When we look back upon those revolutions which happened a generation ago or far enough in the past for us to have become objective in our approach to them, we accept them as natural social phenomena.

Change and revolution are essential to any concept of progress. Therefore it is not revolution we fear; it is not change we dislike. It is the method which concerns us. Peaceful revolution is accepted by Americans as a natural and desirable manifestation of political evolution. Whether or not the individual member of our society favors any given revolution will naturally depend upon the manner in which that revolution affects him and those most closely associated with him. The American people have very little fear of revolutionary changes as they affect the things of the mind. We do not fear revolutionary changes in regard to theories of education. We can even tolerate revolutionary theories about the very nature of man. The revolution we most dread is one which may upset our rights to our earthly belongings. We have come unconsciously to exemplify Machiavelli's theory that "men will sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony."¹ "For so long as neither their property nor their honour is touched," he says again, "the mass of mankind live contentedly. . . ."²

Jefferson was a revolutionary in every sense of the word. The theory of progress he accepted implied a revolutionary doctrine. From his earliest entry on the political stage, he stood out as a leading advocate of the right of the people to alter existing institutions in whatsoever way they wished. No social or political establishment was sacred to the will of the majority. Whenever such an institution interfered

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with the peace and prosperity or the liberties of the people, they could and should assert their right of revolution, their right to change such conditions.

The mere possession of this right has, in the main, satisfied the American people with their government for the past one hundred and fifty years. There have, however, also developed certain theories denying the right of revolution. In the first place, it is said that, the Constitution having once been set up, it is inconceivable that it should be abolished as a whole. We may alter but not abolish, contrary to what Jefferson says in the Declaration of Independence. The Union, once established, cannot be dissolved, the majority having decided that issue once and for all by force of arms. True, the Civil War was a manifestation of the American belief in the right of revolution, but again the majority decided the issue by force of arms. Before the Civil War, Marshall had already proclaimed the doctrine that the Constitution was made to endure through the ages. The oath of office demanded of every government officer carries that assumption. The government and its officers move within the Constitutional limitations and must oppose any attempt to abolish the Constitution.

In the Draft Act Case of 1917 the Supreme Court laid down the principle that there exists in the state itself an inherent right to maintain itself, and it justified the government's right to draft men by appealing to the principle that the whole is greater than any of its parts. With this decision would seem also to go forever the right of the people to abolish the government by revolution.

The American people have never looked with favor upon idealistic anarchy. In talk they may freely approve the notion about the less government the better, but they have never accepted the idea in practice. They like their partner-

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ship in government. They accept those limitations placed in the Constitution itself which logically cannot be amended even by revolution.

All Presidents, except those who have lived through their terms as passively as though serving a four-year sentence, have "abused" the Constitution: Washington in attempting to make of the Senate a Council of State; Jefferson when he sent Lewis and Clark into territory which was not recognized as belonging to the United States; Van Buren in justifying his failure to protect citizens whose civil rights were being grossly abused; Lincoln and a score of others when they used patronage trades to accomplish their ends; Grant in his support of carpetbag elements in the South and the territories; Theodore Roosevelt when he "took" Panama and when he sent the fleet around the world.

Events of recent years do not indicate that the Chief Executive is any more careful than formerly to work within the letter of the Constitution. Franklin D. Roosevelt, by vetoing a bill for a second time, thus overcoming the Congressional review which is granted by the Constitution, manifested a similar disregard for the spirit of that document. So, too, when he showed his evident distrust of Congress, especially of the Senate, after his defeat on the St. Lawrence waterway and the World Court protocol. The spirit of the Constitution plainly expects the President to work with the Senate, not against it. Still, the American people seem rather to have approved the acts of these Presidents. The people seem to see better than the lawyers that the Constitution is not a straitjacket, but a living organism, a guide of the American people to aid them in the accomplishment of their political and social purposes. They accept the idea of free interpretation of governmental functions as a kind of peaceful revolution.

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When we consider the significance of the changes Jefferson proposed in the law of entail and primogeniture, of his proposed separation of church and state, of his suggested plan for universal education; when we realize the audacity of his struggle for the freedom of the slaves; we immediately recognize him as one of the great revolutionists of all time. From the point of view of the American of today, every one of Jefferson's social and political reforms made for the moral and intellectual enlargement of man. Every American is a beneficiary of Jefferson's revolutionary reforms. What would the lives of the youths of today be if they were compelled to live in accordance with the laws, customs, and attitudes of their great-great-grandfathers? Every citizen should thank Jefferson for the part he played in making possible the blessings of the American way of life. Not in the spirit of Carlyle's hero worship, but with the friendly feeling for our great men that our public schools seem so successfully to instill in our young people. To these great men we owe a debt of gratitude which can be repaid only by a vigilant protection of the liberties they made possible.

So fearful was Jefferson of oppression, monarchy, dictatorship, so anxious was he to insure the right of the people to change, remove, and replace their leaders, that he looked with distrust upon every suggestion which would tend to intrench those in power. At the time of its adoption, one of his most serious objections to the Constitution was, as we have seen, the fact that it did not limit the number of terms that the President could serve. He feared that their right of revolution might thus be forcibly taken away from the people. So determined was he that this right should never be lost that he could tolerate even the exercise of force on the part of the people as a warning to those in office that the power of removal always rested with the governed. "The

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spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions, that I wish it to be always kept alive," he wrote in 1787. And continuing he said, "It will often be exercised when wrong, but better so than not to be exercised at all."³ Again, in a letter to Madison in the same year, he wrote, "A little rebellion now and then . . . is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government."⁴ There are four hundred and thirty-five such little rebellions in the United States every two years—one in each Congressional district.

Jefferson knew well that the threat of removal by the people must serve as the one insurance against the unjust use of the powers delegated to the rulers of the people. This ever-present threat must be constantly brought to the attention of those in office by means of frequent elections. In extreme cases even revolution by force might be justified and the possibility of such rebellion was to him a wholesome influence in government. Such was his attitude toward the French Revolution, as expressed in a letter written in 1793, in which he said, "Was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood? My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause, but rather than it should have failed I would have seen half the earth desolated; were there but an Adam and an Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it is now."⁵

The ever-present threat of revolution, peaceful when those in power will accept the will of the majority but always backed by potential force, is the only weapon by means of which the people can control their rulers and insure their own liberty. It is, likewise, the only means by which institutions and laws may be altered and reinterpreted to meet the changing needs of the people. Jefferson was willing to intrust the amendment of the Constitution to the people. So typical is his statement on this subject that it will bear

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quoting in full, though in part it has already been referred to in another connection. It is certainly one of the most significant pronouncements ever made by Jefferson and marks him as an uncompromising liberal, always acknowledging the possibility of progress and the need of adaptive change. In a long letter to Samuel Kerchival, written in 1816, he says:

"Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age well: I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very like the present, but without the experience of the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a century of book-reading; and this they would say themselves, were they to rise from the dead. I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with; because, when once known, we accommodate ourselves to them and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know, also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. . . . We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. . . . Each generation is as independent of the one preceding as that was of all which has gone before. It has, then, like them, a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes most promotive of its own happiness; consequently, to accommodate to the circumstances in which it finds itself, that received from its predecessors . . ."

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In this same letter he warns that "If this avenue be shut to the call of sufferance, it will make itself heard through that of force, and we shall go on, as other nations are doing, in the endless circle of oppression, rebellion, reformation; and oppression, rebellion, reformation, again; and so on forever."⁶

These statements, written but ten years before his death, represent Jefferson's mature and final pronouncement upon the subject of change and revolution. He would never see any form of government fixed unchangeably upon the people, even at the cost of violence.

Jefferson did not limit the right of revolution, the right of the people to change their form of government, to the Colonies, as is evident from his attitude toward the French Revolution. He hoped also that all the countries of the three Americas would eventually free themselves from the domination of European rules and set up governments of their own. He often displayed his interest in all the countries of Latin America, seeming to foresee the time when they would be free from European rule. At times he even expressed the hope that they would join with the United States in some sort of working agreement. His hope in this regard is evidenced in a letter to James Monroe, in which he said, "Although we have no right to intermeddle with the form of government of other nations, yet it is lawful to wish to see no emperors nor kings in our hemisphere, and that Brazil as well as Mexico will homologize with us."⁷ Jefferson openly expressed the hope that every American nation would be able to throw off all bonds of oppression and enjoy the same blessings of self-government possessed by his own fellow countrymen.

Nor did his desire for the establishment of free government allow of any geographic limitations. Before his death

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he thought he saw the seed of freedom taking root in all the world. In a letter to John Adams, written in 1821, he expressed faith in the universal triumph of his revolutionary ideas. "I will not," he said, "believe our labors are lost. I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on a steady advance. We have seen indeed, once within the record of history, the complete eclipse of the human mind continuing for centuries . . . even should the cloud of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe, this country remains to preserve and restore light and liberty to them. In short, the flames kindled on the 4th of July 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism; on the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them."⁸ Has anyone ever stated better the true mission of America? That paragraph might well be required reading for the world today.

Jefferson had already written, "Heaven send that the glorious example of France may be but the beginning of the history of European liberty, and that you may live many years in health and happiness to see at length that heaven did not make man in its wrath."⁹ This hope, expressed to one of his French friends, is repeated at a later date in a letter to John Adams, in which he says, "The light from our West seems to have spread and illuminated the very engines employed to extinguish it. It has given them a glimmering of their rights and their power. The idea of representative government has taken root and growth among them. Their masters feel it, and are saving themselves by timely offers of this modification of their powers. Belgium, Prussia, Poland, Lombardy, etc., are now offered a representative organization; illusive, probably, at first, but it will grow into power in the end. Opinion is power, and

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that opinion will come.”¹⁰ Such expression of hope and faith is more needed today than when it was written. Generations of controlled thinking might seem to extinguish this Jeffersonian philosophy of history, but the sparks are still alive and, even at this dark moment, bid fair to burn again. Reading these words of Jefferson we might well think that he wrote them only yesterday.

The hope that the example of the Colonies might be an inspiration to other peoples to declare their right of revolution was expressed in a letter addressed to the citizens of Washington, just two weeks before his death. He shows here his universal concern for the freedom of mankind: “May it [the Declaration of Independence] be to the world, what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government.”¹¹

The hope of Jefferson, expressed in a letter to President Monroe in 1823, the desire to “make our hemisphere that of freedom,”¹² was a revolutionary pronouncement quite as significant as the Declaration of Independence. From the point of view of pure nationalism, and especially of isolationist nationalism, Jefferson went very far when he assumed the coming of freedom to the whole of the American continents; much farther when he dared hope that America would help bring freedom for all the world. Just as his hope for the freedom of this hemisphere meant the ultimate withdrawal of European control, so his desire to see the Declaration of Independence, with its theory of liberty and freedom, accepted universally meant the ultimate destruction of oppression the world over.

During the period of our struggle for existence, the period

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of the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, Jefferson often expressed himself as being interested only in the welfare of the United States. He at times appeared to play the part of the extreme isolationist. This attitude is easily understood when we consider his deep-seated concern for the safety of our newly established government. There can be no doubt that he would gladly have kept every European influence from the Colonies, rather than to have it threaten the success of the one great experiment which meant so much to the liberties of all mankind. He would protect the new-born republic from every possible danger from without. Yet his concern for the life of this infant was not dictated by any narrow consideration for the welfare of the handful of people then making up the population of these seaboard States. He saw the United States as the torch of liberty that must be preserved, that it might later light the whole world. Jefferson set forth his attitude in this matter in a letter to Richard Rush, written in 1820: "We exist and are quoted as standing proofs that a government, so modelled as to rest continuously on the will of the whole society, is a practicable government. Were we to break to pieces, it would damp the hopes and efforts of the good, and give triumph to those of the bad through the whole enslaved world. As members, therefore, of the universal society of mankind, and standing high in responsible relation with them, it is our sacred duty to suppress passion among ourselves and not to blast the confidence we have inspired of proof that a government of reason is better than a government of force."¹⁸

In no sense can these ideas of Jefferson be assumed to restrict themselves to his own country. They are world wide in significance, and they were accepted in this light by the founding fathers, in spite of the narrow interpretation later made of Washington's Farewell Address. We know that

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the freedom of mankind was their aim; and we know equally well that when once this idea was set forth, there could be no bounds to its application or significance. Jefferson, both in the Declaration and in his expressed hope that this hemisphere would become one of freedom, was echoing the heart's desire of his nation and, in a sense, of all mankind who had accepted Condorcet's theory of progress.

The doctrine that all the nations of America should be free, now known as the Monroe Doctrine, is not only an echo of the desires that were in the hearts of the revolutionary fathers; it is an outgrowth of the desires expressed directly in the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson and his associates had no desire to monopolize the blessings which they were certain would spring from the freedom obtainable only by revolution.

This desire to see freedom reign in the entire western hemisphere was the prevailing political sentiment of Jefferson's time. Historians have too often spoken of the Monroe Doctrine as a singular pronouncement, but its background in Jefferson's teaching should make the fact clear that it is the expression of a truly American principle. John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, has been given credit for it, and some have even said that it had its origin in the supposed influence of England. But twelve years before the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine, the Congress of the United States had passed a resolution on the hemispheric policy of this country which anticipated the Monroe Doctrine. This act of Congress, passed in 1811, should have a place in every textbook which deals with this great doctrine: "Taking into view the peculiar situation of Spain, and of the American provinces; and considering the influence which the Destiny of the territory adjoining the southern border of the United States may have upon their security, tranquillity,

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and commerce: Therefore, resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled, that the United States, under the peculiar circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot, without serious quietude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power; and that a due regard to their own safety compels them to provide under certain contingencies for the temporary occupation of the said territory; they, at the same time, declare that the said territory shall, in their hands, remain subject to future negotiation." * This

* The resolution was not printed in the proceedings of the Senate or House (Legislative) Journals or the Annals of Congress, because it was a confidential resolution passed as a result of a confidential message to the Congress from President Madison under date of January 3, 1811, which message reads as follows:

"To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

"I communicate to Congress, in confidence, a letter, of the 2d of December, from Governor Folch, of West Florida, to the Secretary of State; and another, of the same date, from the same, to John McKee.

"I communicate, in like manner, a letter from the British Chargé d'Affaires to the Secretary of State, with the answer of the latter. Although the letter cannot have been written in consequence of any instruction from the British government, founded on the late order for taking possession of the portion of West Florida well known to be claimed by the United States; although no communication has ever been made by that government to this of any stipulation with Spain, contemplating an interposition which might so materially affect the United States; and although no call can have been made by Spain in the present instance, for the fulfilment of any such subsisting engagement; yet the spirit and scope of the document, with the accredited source from which it proceeds, required that it should not be withheld from the consideration of Congress.

"Taking into view the tenor of these several communications, the posture of things with which they are connected, the intimate relation of the country adjoining the United States, eastward of the river Perdido, to their security and tranquillity, and the peculiar interest they otherwise have in its destiny: I recommend to the consideration of Congress, the seasonableness of a declaration that the United States

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resolution became the American policy in law twelve years before President Monroe made his pronouncement. In 1812, in keeping with the rights given him by this resolution, Madison sent troops to foreign territory in the Americas to defend that foreign territory from attack by European powers.

The fear of failure of the great governmental experiment was largely responsible for Jefferson's desire to keep out all European "isms" which might undermine and ultimately destroy the thing to establish which he had devoted his life. No matter how we may interpret his many expressions of a desire to be free from European influences, any study of his life and utterances cannot help revealing the fact that Jefferson was the great champion of world progress and world

could not see, without serious inquietude, any part of a neighboring territory, in which they have, in different respects, so deep and so just a concern, pass from the hands of Spain into those of any other foreign power.

"I recommend to their consideration, also, the expediency of authorizing the Executive to take temporary possession of any part or parts of the said territory, in pursuance of arrangements which may be desired by the Spanish authorities; and for making provision for the government of the same, during such possession.

"The wisdom of Congress will, at the same time, determine how far it may be expedient to provide for the event of a subversion of the Spanish authorities within the territory in question, and an apprehended occupancy thereof by any other foreign power.

"JAMES MADISON."

The message and resolution may both be found in the Executive (Confidential) Journal of the Senate, Volume 2, 1805-1815, Jan. 3, 1811, pp. 175-6; January 11, 1811, page 282. The Executive Journal does not report any debate which may have occurred on this confidential resolution, but does record the final vote in the Senate: Yeas, 23; Nays, 6.

The resolution passed in 1941 does not add to the authority which Congress granted to the President in 1811. The 1941 law is merely a reiteration of a policy adopted before the War of 1812.

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liberty. As America herself looks for her concepts of liberty and progressive government largely to him, so does the world today, as it has for the past hundred years, look to America as the rallying standard of liberty and progress.

The concept of the right of revolution was not new to the founding fathers. Milton had carried the idea to its theoretical limit in his *Defence of the English People*, in which essay he maintained that the ruler ceases to be such as soon as his actions make him unworthy of the position he occupies. Even in the case of a hereditary monarch, whose right to rule was seldom questioned, that right must rest on service to the people. As soon as the king becomes an oppressor, he ceases to be a king and may be replaced by the people. Milton could have found good authority for his point of view in the Chinese theory, often expressed, that virtue alone fitted the ruler for his position. When Mencius was asked, "May a minister put his sovereign to death?" he answered, "He who outrages the benevolence proper to his nature is called a robber; he who outrages righteousness is called a ruffian. The robber and the ruffian we call a mere fellow. I have heard of the cutting off of the fellow Chou, but I have not heard of the putting a sovereign to death in his case."¹⁴ When the ruler behaved like a ruffian or a robber, he could no longer be considered a sovereign and he forfeited his right to office. So, too, Jefferson, commenting on the French Revolution, said, "I am not prepared to say that the first magistrate of a nation cannot commit treason against his country."¹⁵

The idea of substituting ballots for bullets was, in itself, a tremendously important revolution. There was nothing essentially new in the concept that the right to govern might be terminated by the governed; it was the determination to build a practical, working government based on that idea

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that was new. It was Jefferson's willingness to consider this concept in the light, not of theory only, but of practice which marks him as a great revolutionary thinker. To him this was an ideal now, at long last, brought within the practical reach of man. History gave him little reason to hope for such a working political philosophy, but in spite of that fact, he never lost faith in its success.

The political concept of the right of revolution—the right to overthrow and to remove—has ever since made it necessary for every ruler to justify his actions on grounds of high morality. There may remain in America to this day “rotten boroughs,” controlled elections, gerrymanderings, and political controls of various kinds; but where free election exists—and if it is not universal in America, it is the rule more often than the exception—the candidate who justifies his record on any other theory than that which makes public office a public trust will surely fail. The right of revolution is the safeguard of democracy.



10

Slavery

IN THIS VOLUME we can deal with the subject of slavery only as it pertains to Jefferson's political theory. This approach is, of course, quite inadequate. Only in passing, it might be well to call attention to the fact that Negro slavery in America was a unique social and economic phenomenon. It was restricted to a single race and was justified on the score that this race was slave by nature and that it was the Negro's soul quite as much as his body that made him a slave. American Negro slavery was purely economic; the slaves were not captured in war or enslaved for punishment or purchased for marriage with the slave owner. They were simply bought as beasts of burden. The American slave system was therefore not like slavery in other places and other times, nor was it like the other forms of slavery that existed with it here in America. Indians were enslaved, bond servants were owned, and various types of trade or apprentice servitude were practiced at the same time. Before our laws against "white slavery" stopped certain kinds of traffic in human beings, there existed a form of bondage which was little understood even in America, and is still

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not generally understood as it continues in Asia.* Slavery in the American Negro sense has passed from the world; but other types of slavery still exist in many places.

Jefferson's writings, of course, deal with Negro slavery in America. His reaction to the problem was the product of a logical mind and a high moral sense. Such a statement should not be interpreted to mean that all who disagreed with Jefferson failed to reach the same high moral plane. Jefferson himself realized that there were good men on both sides of the slavery controversy. I do not intend here to justify one position as against the other. But it is of interest to note that Jefferson's views in the matter have been vindicated by history, that the force of his logic became the driving force of a nation which finally freed its slaves. The long-continued practice of Negro slavery has produced many social and political problems which are uniquely American, problems not found elsewhere in the world where slavery has likewise flourished and been abolished. These problems are known to every American and need no discussion here. What does concern us now is the interesting speculation whether America might not have been spared much sorrow, and even bloodshed, if more of Jefferson's contemporaries had shared his views on slavery.†

* In the nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century, our western towns, for instance, had experience with the Japanese traffic in women, and shrugged it off on the mistaken assumption that it was identical with the ordinary prostitution so common in the United States.

† My justification for discussing slavery at all in this volume must be the able discussion of this question by Brigadier General Jefferson Randolph Kean, a fellow member of the Jefferson Memorial Commission, at one of our meetings. The thoughtful reader will in any case have by now asked himself what Jefferson, the apostle of human freedom, must have thought of the institution of slavery in whose midst he grew up. In the appendix of this volume is included a paper

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Jefferson's attitude toward slavery is all the more noteworthy when we consider his time and the conditions under which he lived. His was the day when the divine right of rulers was part of the prevalent political philosophy. Class rule, rule by the favored few, the aristocracy, the property holders, was taken for granted as the natural order of things. The laws of inheritance were made to maintain this class structure of society. Slavery, therefore, was merely a special case of the generally accepted scheme. Moreover, Jefferson himself inherited slaves and was born in a community where all his equals were likewise slaveholders. One would hardly expect opposition to the institution of slavery to flourish among its beneficiaries. That, even under these unfavorable circumstances, Jefferson's love of liberty should bring him to advocate freedom for the Negro is enough to give us renewed faith in man, in his ability to rise above self-interest and social pressure, in his willingness to cling to an ideal without hope of personal reward. Only in his fight for religious liberty did Jefferson manifest to an equal degree the same high purpose, the same disregard of public condemnation, the same readiness to question accepted institutions.

In Jefferson's political philosophy, as we have seen, all men were created equal; that is, they could claim equality before the law and they were equal in their right to control their own persons. This equality, being given of God, made each man free by birth to regulate his own life as it pleased him so long as he did not interfere with the equal right of others to do the same. No one, therefore, has the natural right to dispose of the person of another. Jefferson believed that the most able members of society should direct its public activities, but the right so to direct was not associated with

by General Kean which contains the essence of what inspired this chapter.

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birth or with class or with color. There was no right of race, no race superiority from the standpoint of right. There was no chosen people. Individual accomplishment and virtue were the only marks of God's elect. Jefferson seems, incidentally, to have understood the dulling effect on any people of the notion that they are the chosen of the Lord, or of nature.

Jefferson was opposed to the physical bondage of Negro slavery as he was opposed to every form of human enslavement and tyranny: economic, mental, and spiritual. If the same God who "gave us life" has at the same time implanted in us our love for freedom as a sign that freedom is our natural right, how dare we presume to put any of His children in bondage? This terrible contradiction can have only dire consequences for the enslavers. "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure," he asks, "when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."¹

Jefferson seems hardly able to understand how God could permit slavery. "When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, doubtless, a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, at length, by His exterminating thunder, manifest His attention to the things of this world, and that

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they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.”² He was convinced that “there is a superior bench reserved in heaven for those who hasten”³ the end of slavery.

Jefferson saw another great contradiction in the existence, side by side, of the love of liberty and the fact of slavery. Such lip service to the cause of freedom was not for Jefferson. “What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man!” he exclaims, “who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and, the next moment, be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose.”⁴ He knows, however, that this is one of the most common anomalies of history. Did not the same Church whose members died at the stake rather than deny Jesus institute the Inquisition? Did not the same Puritans who came to America to escape religious persecution become the witch-burners of Salem?

Jefferson began to work for the eventual emancipation of the slaves at an early stage in his public career. As soon as he was sent by the people of his county to the House of Burgesses, he made clear his stand on this question by introducing a bill to make it legal for slave owners to free their slaves. This bill, which was not passed, represents the beginning of his long fight for freedom of the slaves. From that time, 1769, says Hirst, “he returned, as we shall see, again and yet again to the charge—the only powerful statesman of his day in America who was willing to risk political fortune and social favour in an active effort to remove this dark blot from the institutions of his native land.”⁵

Whenever the opportunity afforded, Jefferson renewed his efforts to limit and do away with slavery. When Virginia

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ceded its western possessions to the United States, Jefferson was made chairman of a committee to draw up a plan of government for the new territory. This plan included the following provision: "That after the year 1800 of the Christian era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States, otherwise than in punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been convicted to have been personally guilty."⁶ Much to Jefferson's disappointment this provision against slavery was stricken from the bill by one vote in Congress. A new bill prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory was introduced by Richard Henry Lee in 1788, while Jefferson was in France, and was passed by Congress. In commenting on Jefferson's early attempt to prohibit the spread of slavery westward to any of the territories, Adams says, "Had he had his way, the West would have been white and free from the Gulf to Canada."⁷ Bates further remarks that had his anti-slavery provision become law, the Civil War might have been averted. Had Washington been willing to stand with Jefferson on this issue, the slaves might have been freed without bloodshed.⁸ The freeing of the slaves in 1790 would have kept two whole generations of blacks from the slave market. It would have lessened the problems growing out of the freeing of the slaves, for the slaves themselves in their attempts to adjust to new conditions, and for the free men in the changing social and economic order. To have kept the spread of slavery from any new territory outside the thirteen original States would have reduced the slave States by half and would probably have made the Civil War impossible. We cannot make history over, but we can justly call attention to Jefferson's masterful statesmanship.

Jefferson was well aware of the difficulties connected with any attempt to bring about the freeing of the slaves. He did,

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however, believe that emancipation was possible and certain. His greatest concern was to bring it about peacefully and justly. As early as 1782, he wrote, "The way, I hope, is preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation."⁹ He repeatedly expressed the fear that unless emancipation came peacefully, it must come as the result of rebellion and bloodshed.

The method by which the slaves might be freed was often the subject of his letters. First, he would have prevented the importation of any new slaves; he would have limited slavery to the States where it was already established; he would have given freedom to all children born to slave parents after a certain date; he would have made it possible for individual owners to give freedom to their slaves; he would have had the governments of the slave States purchase the slaves and free them; he would have colonized the slaves in some state of their own, where they could be taught to govern themselves. Thus, by limiting the importation of slaves and the spread of slavery and by freeing the children of slaves, he would have eliminated slavery by a natural and gradual process. He would, then, care for the free colored citizens by establishing them where they could live by themselves, enjoying the privileges of free people.

The practical manner in which Jefferson set about starting this movement toward freedom should not be overlooked. The first step was to make it possible for the masters to free their slaves. The mutuality which would follow such a law would make it possible for adjustments in the social and economic life of the master and the slave to be made gradually. In some parts of the country this step was taken, and we know from actual experience that adjustments were

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facilitated. His second suggestion, that all children born after a given date be declared free, would have had the same wholesome effect of a gradual readjustment.

In a declaration of the Rights of British America, prepared in 1774, Jefferson said, "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those Colonies, where it was, unhappily, introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa."¹⁰ In a proposed constitution for Virginia, prepared in 1776, he included the clause, "No person hereafter coming into this country shall be held within the same in slavery under any pretext whatever."¹¹ This, then, would be the first step in the process of emancipation. There should be no new importations to increase the number of slaves and intensify the problem. Mention has already been made of Jefferson's attempt to prevent the spread of slavery to any of the western territories, thus limiting the problem to the sections where the practice already existed.

His plan for freeing the children of slave parents was often set forth in statements similar to that contained in a letter to Jared Sparks in 1824, in which he says that he thinks this problem can be solved "by emancipating the after-born, leaving them, on due compensation, with their mothers, until their services are worth their maintenance, and then putting them to industrious occupations until a proper age for deportation. This was the result of my reflections on the subject five and forty years ago, and I have never yet been able to conceive any other practicable plan."¹² In further comment on the possibility of colonization of the slaves, he says in the same letter, "In the disposition of these unfortunate people, there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view. First. The establishment of a colony on the

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coast of Africa, which may introduce among the aborigines the arts of cultivated life and the blessings of civilization and science. By doing this, we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population.”¹³ This same suggestion had been made in a letter written just ten years before, bearing out Jefferson’s statement that he had not seen fit to change his mind on this subject: “As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole, as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation after a given age.”¹⁴

The suggestion that the government purchase the slaves and free them presented many problems to Jefferson, yet he was willing to try any plan which might possibly solve the problem. He was of the opinion that such a project should be undertaken, if at all, by the States which were faced immediately with the slavery problem, rather than by the federal government. He was definitely inclined to the opinion that the slavery question was one to be solved by the States where the institution prevailed.

“I had always hoped,” says Jefferson, “that the younger generation receiving their early impressions after the flame of liberty had been kindled in every breast, and had become, as it were, the vital spirit of every American, that the generous temperament of youth, analogous to the motion of the blood, and above the suggestions of avarice, would have sympathized with oppression wherever found, and proved their love of liberty beyond their own share of it.”¹⁵ But, “I have not perceived the growth of this disposition in the rising generation, of which I once had sanguine hopes. No symptoms inform me that it will take place in my day.

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I leave it, therefore, to time, and not at all without hope that the day will come, equally desirable and welcome to us as to them.”¹⁶

In his youth Jefferson had hoped to see the time when the slaves would be free. During his entire life he took every opportunity to raise his voice in favor of such an emancipation. Yet, as the end of life approached, and he despaired of seeing the fulfillment of his hopes, he still had faith that the abolition of the evil was not impossible. “. . . it ought,” he says, “never, therefore, to be despairs of. Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried, which may do something towards the ultimate object.”¹⁷ A few years before he wrote this (1820) he had said, “I can say with conscious truth that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach in any *practicable* way. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But, as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale and self-preservation in the other.”¹⁸ One of his last statements on this subject displays his undying faith in the ultimate outcome of the struggle for complete freedom: “At the age of eighty-two, with one foot in the grave and the other uplifted to follow it, I do not permit myself to take part in any new enterprises, even for bettering the condition of man; not even in the great one which is the subject of your letter, and which has been through life that of my greatest anxieties. The march of events has not been such as to render its completion practicable within the limits of time allotted

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to me; and I leave its accomplishment as the work of another generation.”¹⁹

The writings of Jefferson on slavery would make a small volume. This discussion has simply indicated his general position in the matter. Surely it adds to the cumulative evidence provided by any phase of his life and work, that liberty was of all things dearest to him. Freedom was to him the greatest of all God’s gifts to His children; it was not justly to be denied any individual whose use of that freedom did not injure society. As we look back on the half century following the death of Jefferson, we cannot help wishing that there had been other great men in his day willing to face the slavery question as he did. The strife which tore a nation asunder and caused the death, misery, and sorrow of thousands might well have been averted, had the love of liberty been as deep-rooted in the hearts of his fellow statesmen as it was in that of Thomas Jefferson.

History seems to teach that mankind as a whole often suffers for the past mistakes of some men. Failure to employ corrective measures, to face the immediate situation, often brings much greater problems and multiplies the cost of the ultimate solution. Nothing better illustrates this fact than the present situation in Europe and Asia. In May of 1941 newspapers announced the surrender of the Duke of Aosta to British forces in Ethiopia. This should have been the cause of very serious thought for all students of history. In 1935 all the world knew that the Italian conquest of Ethiopia was not right. All right-thinking people realized that it was an act of palpable immorality. Yet no one wished to assume the risk of preventing this invasion of human liberty. The cost would be too great. Better appease Mussolini. Now, looking back, everyone realizes how minor both the risk and the

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cost would have been compared to the cost and loss which have resulted because the world would not stand for what it knew was right.

In a similar manner, the world refused to take steps to prevent the invasion of Manchuria by Japan. Here again the cost was too great; yet this failure to act threw open the floodgates of conquest in the world, and millions of lives and untold treasure will be required at the hands of those who refused to meet the small cost of restraining an aggressor. To blunder ignorantly is excusable; but to refuse to take a stand against an aggression which all know is morally wrong, is hardly pardonable. Of course, it is easy for us to pass judgment today; and there is no way of measuring the ills that follow in the wake of social, political, and economic blunders, whether they be willful or the result of well-intended but misguided motives. But surely, even before its consequences become apparent to all, the willful refusal to face a moral issue does seem more deserving of punishment than does an unintentional blunder.

Why cannot men today see this as clearly as Jefferson did and realize, as he did, that the liberties of a nation cannot be secure "when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God?"²⁰ If the peoples of the world are not convinced that there is such a thing as international immorality, how can we ever expect to establish international morality? Perhaps the sense of morality still exists in the world. Perhaps the world feels as helpless to do anything about the matter as Jefferson did about solving the slavery problem in his day. If we still know the difference between right and wrong, surely we should not deceive ourselves with the notion that we have no responsibility to pass judgment on the acts of nations. To tell the people that they

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should remain indifferent to international injustice is to corrupt and mislead them.

Had the statesmen of Jefferson's day faced the moral issue of slavery, they would have prevented a great war and years of painful readjustment. Surely the time has arrived for the statesmen of the world to realize that the time to check international immorality is in its incipiency. It is never wise to postpone the choice between right and wrong.



11

International Relations

WAS THERE EVER a time in modern history when there was more need than there is today of recalling the ideals of Thomas Jefferson in regard to international affairs? Seldom have great powers displayed such complete disregard for standards of morality in their dealings with one another as in the last decade. The "New Orders" in Europe and Asia are based on the theory that only the strong have rights which need respecting, that treaties are made only to be repudiated when they no longer serve the immediate needs of the stronger of the contracting parties. Tariffs, embargoes, and blockades stifle the flow of the world's trade through normal channels. The peoples of the world are divided into two great camps locked in a mortal military and economic struggle. Never was a reminder of the sound principles in the conduct of world affairs more urgent. No one can foresee the tragic results of failure to re-establish international morality, which had so completely disintegrated before and during the present world struggle.

Thomas Jefferson served as Minister to France, as Secretary of State in Washington's first Cabinet, as President during the time that England and France were struggling

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for supremacy in Europe. Dealing constantly with the foreign affairs of the nation, he developed a very definite theory of international relations, one which deserves careful attention at the present time. It is nothing less than tragic that his lofty ideals are perhaps farther from realization today than at any time since he expressed them.

At the foundation of Jefferson's view of international relations was his conviction that the same moral code which should guide the individual in his intercourse with his fellow men should guide nations in their dealings with one another. Morality grows out of the needs of society. "I know but one code of morality for men," he said, "whether acting singly or collectively."¹ That conduct which works for the benefit of the group, because of that benefit becomes moral. Such moral conduct will, in the end, always work to the benefit of the individual. No individual, in other words, can afford to act other than in accordance with the highest moral standards of the group in which he lives. Where his personal interests appear to conflict with morality, he is only being deceived by appearances. The same applies to nations in the world community.

In our western world, we tend to confuse morality and religion. It is, indeed, the strong ethical aspects of Christianity and Judaism that are largely responsible for this confusion. We therefore assume that a man whose acts are above criticism is a religious man, and that the religious sanction is sufficient to make action moral. But since there is no universally accepted religion, the morality of nations must have other sanctions. Jefferson found such sanctions in the laws of nature and in the nature of man and society.

There is a theory that the law-giving state is itself above law and outside the control of moral sanctions. This theory of the irresponsible state is naturally prevalent among the

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apologists for totalitarianism. These deride the idea of a higher law regulating the conduct of a state whether internally in relation to its subjects or externally in relation to the other states. If there were a law for the state, say the defenders of the single-will philosophy, there would be a law-giver; since there is no law-giver, there is no law. Therefore, international law does not exist and international behavior is determined only by relations of power.

Jefferson, on the other hand, looked at the world at large as a social unit, in which the nations take the place of the individuals in the smaller group. The individual, too, had certain absolute and inalienable rights, but this did not make his moral and social obligations to other individuals any the less binding on him. Jefferson insisted that the same reasoning which applied to the individual as a member of the society in which he lived must apply to the nation as a member of the society of nations. He could see no difference in the duty which the individual owed to his community and that which the nation owed to the community of nations. He set up one standard of behavior for men and for groups of men. In his own words, "He who says I will be a rogue when I act in company with a hundred others, but an honest man when I act alone, will be believed in the former assertion, but not in the latter. . . . If the morality of one man produces a just line of conduct in him, acting individually, why should not the morality of one hundred men produce a just line of conduct in them, acting together? But I indulge myself in these reflections, because my own feelings run me into them. . . . Let us hope that our new government will take some other occasions to show that they mean to proscribe no virtue from the canons of their conduct with other nations."¹

In this statement Jefferson reflected the best thought of

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the founding fathers, in whose motives and actions goodness as well as greatness must be recognized. The real hopes and aspirations of the American Revolution become evident when we let Jefferson interpret them for us. And is not this still the real meaning of America? Now as she takes sides in the great war engulfing the world, she is again fighting for the right, as she did before, under Lincoln and Wilson. She is again fighting in the spirit of the founding fathers for the preservation of "virtue" in the "canons" governing her "conduct with other nations."

Carrying his philosophy of individual morality over into the field of world affairs, Jefferson held that moral international conduct must, in the long run, be the course most certain to insure the welfare of nations. Whenever the course of national righteousness and that of evident expediency seemed to conflict, it was time to re-examine the situation, for the path of morality and national happiness were one and the same.² The path of aggression, of conquest, of oppression, of treaty breaking could lead only to national moral bankruptcy and ultimate disaster.³ It is a strange fact of history that the concept of national morality has played but a minor part in the dealings of nations with their neighbors, even when internally they have developed personal morality to the highest degree. There seemed to Jefferson no sound basis for such a different application of the principles of right social conduct to the individual and to the group.

Jefferson would have carried over completely the principles of Christian ethics into the field of international intercourse. While he recognized certain national rights which should be upheld at all odds, he was willing to show the same fairness which would be proper in the case of individual rights, even going beyond what the strictest inter-

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pretation of justice might demand. "Far from a disposition to avail ourselves of the peculiar situation of any belligerent nation to ask concessions incompatible with their rights, with justice, or reciprocity, we have never proposed to any the sacrifice of a single right: and in consideration of existing circumstances, we have ever been willing, where our duty to other nations permitted us, to relax for a time, and in some cases, that strictness of right which the laws of nature, the acknowledgments of the civilized world, and the equality and independence of nations entitle us to."⁴ Thus, in diplomacy Jefferson would never do unto other nations what he would not be willing to have done to his own country. This is, in brief, Jefferson's code of international morality: justice and fair dealing according to the best standards of personal righteousness, with a willingness to go under certain circumstances even beyond the demands of the strictest justice.

As faith and trust in other men is the source of democratic life and free intercourse, so faith and trust in the actions and promises of our sister nations is the source of peace and free intercourse among nations. Morality is the cornerstone of the fundamental American political philosophy. Without it democracy becomes a mob. Without it America would become a chaos of conflicting forces or a dictatorship of iron-willed control. Freedom and liberty are as dependent upon morality as the body is upon food.

It would be difficult to express in better terms than Jefferson has done the logic which led him to his lofty concept of national morality. "The moral duties which exist between individual and individual in a state of nature, accompany them into a state of society, and the aggregate of the duties of all the individuals composing the society constitutes the duties of that society towards any other; so that between society and society the same moral duties exist as did be-

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tween the individuals composing them while in an unassociated state, their Maker not having released them from those duties on their forming themselves into a nation.”⁵

It is by no means impossible for nations to live as neighbors, maintaining friendly relations similar to those existing between individuals living as neighbors. “I am,” he says, “in all cases for a liberal conduct towards other nations, believing that the practice of the same friendly feelings and generous dispositions, which attach individuals in private life, will attach societies on the larger scale, which are composed of individuals.”⁶ If this assumption were not a true one, the American federal system would have been impossible. To bring about a world of peace, some phase of federal relationship is essential. When the new world is established and writers deal with its history and its theory, it will likely be a commonplace to note that America’s outstanding contribution to the new world was her federal system.

International good will is by no means an unattainable goal, yet it can be attained only by the practice of those same virtues which are productive of fellowship within the community. In a letter to J. B. Say, written in 1815, Jefferson included a statement which might well be accepted as his code of international conduct. He says he had hoped that a nation, distant from the wars of Europe, “avoiding all offences to other powers, and not over-hasty in resenting offence from them, doing justice to all, faithfully fulfilling the duties of neutrality, performing all offices of amity, and administering to their interests by the benefits of our commerce, that such a nation . . . might expect to live in peace, and consider itself merely as a member of the great family of mankind. . . .”⁷

Thus, Jefferson’s concept of neutrality grew out of a sense, not of nationalistic isolationism, but of the moral

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bonds between nations. The fact that two nations saw fit to become tigers and tear each other to pieces was no reason why a third nation could not remain aloof from their conflict. But the ability of that third nation to remain aloof would depend upon whether the warring nations themselves did not negate the moral rights of the neutral. Thus, the seas must be kept free and belong to no nation. Again, nations at war must conduct themselves with a certain amount of restraint, imposing their force only upon the enemy and in accordance with the rule that those states which were not parties to the war should suffer as little inconvenience as possible.

The world must be regarded as a unit. An unwholesome condition in any part affects the entire world. Despotism, treachery, and treaty breaking in any part of the world must have their evil influence on every other part. On the other hand, "A single good government is a blessing to the whole earth."⁸ The interdependence of the nations, their differing abilities to produce various things of universal need, makes it necessary to think of the world as a unit commercially as well as politically. This point of view, coupled with Jefferson's conception of America as a great agricultural commonwealth, led naturally to his acceptance of the principles of free trade. He accepted fully the theory that prosperity could best be promoted by the unhampered flow of trade among the nations. He was an enthusiastic disciple of Adam Smith, as evidenced by his statement that, "Instead of embarrassing commerce under piles of regulating laws, duties and prohibitions, could it be relieved from all its shackles in all parts of the world, could every country be employed in producing that which nature has best fitted it to produce, and each be free to exchange with others mutual surpluses for mutual wants, the greatest mass possible would then be produced

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of those things which contribute to human life and human happiness; the numbers of mankind would be increased, and their condition bettered.”⁹

If it were by now still necessary to stress the breadth of scope of Jefferson’s thought and sympathies—the fact that he was a world citizen—the wording of this statement should suffice. He talked in terms of mankind, he thought in terms of Jeremy Bentham’s theory of the “greatest happiness of the greatest number,”* now so often misquoted. Peace and friendship with all mankind, the prosperity and happiness of the entire world—Jefferson seldom thought in terms less inclusive than these, except when dealing with the immediate questions of administration which occupied so great a part of his effort as a public official.

When forced by the trade restrictions instituted by England and France, Jefferson reluctantly consented to a policy of tariffs. The erection of such trade barriers was in no way in accordance with what he considered good trade policy, but he was obliged by circumstances to retreat temporarily from the stand he had formerly taken of complete freedom in exchange of goods. Theoretically, he continued to maintain the desirability of an economic world unity, wherein the inhabitants of every country would be engaged in the production of goods best suited to their resources of materials and labor, exchanging them without hindrance for the products of other peoples. He would have swept the world free of all trade barriers, fully convinced that such a policy would insure the greatest aggregate of happiness and prosperity. He recognized the fact that there can be no real prosperity of any part without prosperity of the whole.

Such a program of free trade, involving as it must for many

* Cf. Catlin, George. *Anglo-Saxony and Its Tradition*, New York, 1939, p. 184.

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countries the production of a limited variety of goods, depends for success upon the unhampered use by all nations of the ocean highways. Ships must be free to carry the products of the nations unchallenged to all parts of the world. Any international system of production and trade which makes one part of the world dependent for its prosperity on all other parts, can operate only where freedom of the seas is guaranteed. It follows, therefore, that Jefferson should consider "The ocean, like the air, is the common birthright of mankind."¹⁰ We are not surprised when we hear him say, "The ocean is the common property of all."¹¹ Such a position is essential to the fulfillment of the dreams of the free-trader. The ocean cannot be placed under the jurisdiction of any nation; it is the common highway on which all must have equal right to ply their trade. No nation may have the right to intercept any vessel of a friendly nation carrying cargo on the high seas.¹² Such interference with the commerce of neutral nations would be nothing less than piracy and should be met with the same stern measures employed to suppress brigandage. Jefferson's attitude toward such interference with ocean traffic was made amply clear when he sent our navy to punish the pirates of North Africa. Had the United States been in a position to enforce her demands on England and France, there is little doubt that he would have insisted with equal determination that the rights of our ships to sail the Atlantic be respected.

When Jefferson resorted to his famous embargo it was with the same punitive spirit he displayed when he made war on the pirates. England and France had both violated the rights of free nations and they should be punished. He assumed they were dependent upon the products of the United States and that if they were unable to obtain them they would suffer and have a change of heart. The embargo

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had something of the same spirit as our Neutrality Act of 1935, for it supplemented, as far as it went, the intended effect of the sanctions of the League of Nations against Italy. But the embargo we imposed under the acts of 1936 and 1937 did not have that strong purpose. Our purpose then was based entirely on a fear of war. Our people were curbed so that they might not furnish a cause for war. Whereas Jefferson's embargo was in the defense of a national right by a weak power, the embargoes incident to the acts of 1936 and 1937 were run-away acts by which we gave up national rights in the interest of expedient peace though we were strong enough to defend those rights. They were based on the assumption that war was always bad and that any sacrifice was justified to avoid it. Had the embargoes remained within the discretion of the Executive and been allowed to operate against the wrongdoer only, they would have been strong and effective because based on a moral purpose; but when we accepted the mandatory theory of neutrality and thereby imposed the embargo against the aggressor and his victim with equal weight, the act became immoral, for it punished the victim of a wrong for the act of the wrongdoer and made such a victim likewise a wrongdoer for resisting attack.

The theory of the freedom of the seas was, of course, not original with Jefferson. He, however, in association with Benjamin Franklin, was the first to make a serious attempt to have this doctrine recognized as a formal policy by the great powers of Europe. While these efforts were in the main fruitless, due credit must be given to these two great American statesmen for this undertaking. Hirst, commenting on these negotiations, remarks, "When this reform is finally adopted, by a more humane world, let it not be forgotten that Franklin and Jefferson were its pioneers."¹⁸ Prussia

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was the only one of the European countries which accepted the idea of freedom of the seas, as set forth by Franklin and Jefferson, and with that country they were able to enter into a treaty which, among other provisions, contained the following: "If war should arise between the two contracting parties, the merchants of either country, then residing in the other, shall be allowed to remain nine months to collect their debts and settle their affairs, and may depart freely, carrying off all their effects without molestation or hindrance; and all women and children, scholars of every faculty, cultivators of the earth, artisans, manufacturers, and fishermen, unarmed and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages, or places, and in general all others, whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, shall be allowed to continue their respective employments, and shall not be molested in their persons, nor shall their houses and goods be burnt, or otherwise destroyed, nor their fields wasted by the armed force of the enemy into whose power, by the events of war, they may happen to fall; but, if anything is necessary to be taken from them for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at a reasonable price. And all merchants and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of human life more easy to be obtained, and more general, shall be allowed to pass free and unmolested; and neither of the contracting powers shall grant or issue any commission to any private armed vessels, empowering them to take or destroy such trading vessels, or interrupt such commerce."¹⁴ How different the principles herein set forth to those put into practice by the present rulers of Prussia! Ideas similar to those incorporated in the American-Prussian treaty made possible the stability and extension of trade from the downfall of

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Napoleon to the beginning of the World War of 1914. Why should America not suggest the provisions of this treaty as a war aim for the United Nations?

Hoping for peace and friendship with all nations, Jefferson saw no need of a larger navy than was absolutely necessary to defend our shores. He feared a standing army as a means of possible oppression, a big navy as a burden which would crush the nation financially. Jefferson's views in this regard are similar to, though they went beyond, those of the statesmen who were responsible for the provision in the Constitution which forbids appropriations of money for the support of the army "for a longer term than two years." The writers of the Constitution feared merely the power of the federal government; they had known the power of the English King and the experience of the British Parliament in curbing it. Jefferson, however, wanted to guard against the evils of militarism itself.

Still, Jefferson knew that no government in the world of his day and for many years to come could do without an army. That he wanted it well trained is evidenced by his establishment of the military academy at West Point. He realized, too, that should the United States develop an extensive foreign trade, a navy would be necessary to protect its ocean commerce. As has been suggested before, he had hoped, at least until the later years of his life, that America would become a great agricultural commonwealth, leaving commerce to the nations of Europe. As he saw the trend toward commercial development, he realized that "we should possess some power" on the sea. Yet he wrote as late as 1800, "We are running navigation mad, and commerce mad, and navy mad, which is worst of all."¹⁵ As our ocean commerce increased he would increase our navy sufficiently to protect our ships and prevent blockade of our own ports,

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but he was opposed to accepting any obligation which would require a navy to defend.

In the absence of a naval force sufficient to guarantee our right to the use of the sea lanes, and not desiring to take sides in the quarrels of European powers, Jefferson developed our first neutrality policy. Not desiring to be involved in war, yet determined not to acknowledge the right of belligerents to intercept and search our merchant ships, he suggested an embargo which would inhibit "the departure of our vessels from the ports of the United States."¹⁶ This move brought such opposition from the people of New England that Jefferson says, "I felt the foundations of the government shaken under my feet."¹⁷ Jefferson thought that any attempt to insist on the right of American vessels to trade where they wished would involve his country in war with both England and France, and knowing that he could not reasonably accept the responsibility for any such conflict, he adopted the policy of strict neutrality, even at the expense of a sacrifice of the benefits of continued ocean commerce and our right to the use of the sea lanes. There is no doubt, however, that he would never have permitted the warring nations to interfere with American trade, had he possessed the means at his command of maintaining our rights to the freedom of the seas. The United States would continue to insist that her right to the use of the high seas be respected by belligerent powers. The embargo, by depriving the belligerents of necessary American goods, was intended to enforce this lesson.

As to the use made of Jefferson's neutrality policies, as well as of Washington's utterances, to support the isolationist proposals of today, we only do violence to the spirit of these men and to their conception of America if we interpret our duties in relation to the rest of the world in accordance with what the necessities of a struggling nation, barely removed

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from its swaddling clothes and surrounded by powerful enemies, made wise and necessary.

The same neutrality which was desirable in time of war was to be observed with equal strictness when the internal affairs of foreign nations were under consideration. While it is impossible for us to be unconcerned over all the internal developments within every nation of the world, while we should wish to see the people of every country enjoy the blessings of good government, every people should be left to work out its own problems without interference from outside. "The presumption," he says, "of dictating to an independent nation the form of its government, is so arrogant, so atrocious, that indignation, as well as moral sentiment, enlists all our partialities and prayers in favor of one, and our equal execrations against the other."¹⁸ No government should interfere in the internal affairs of another or dictate the form of government that should be established there. Jefferson never wavered in his support of the proposition that the people of each nation should be left to determine their own form of government. One statement on this subject embodies in most striking language his attitude in the matter: "The rights of nations to self-government being my polar star, my partialities are steered by it, without asking whether it is a Bonaparte or an Alexander towards whom the helm is directed."¹⁹

If the people wish a Bonaparte as their ruler, no nation has the right to deny them their choice. Although Jefferson hated all the things that Napoleon stood for, he denied the right of England and the other European powers to dictate to the people of France the removal of Napoleon. Jefferson was interested in the success of a great principle; he was quite indifferent as to the fate of the individuals who might happen to be involved in any struggle of the moment in which this

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principle was at stake. His personal feelings could be placed completely in the background, when such matters of principle were involved. In commenting on Napoleon's struggle to return to power in France, he says, "No man more severely condemned Bonaparte than myself during his former career, for his unprincipled enterprises on the liberty of his own country, and the independence of others. But the allies having now taken up his pursuits, and he arrayed himself on the legitimate side, I also am changed as to him. He is now fighting for the independence of nations, of which his whole life hitherto had been a continued violation, and he has now my prayers as sincerely for success as he had before for his overthrow. He has promised a free government to his own country, and to respect the rights of others; and although his former conduct does not inspire entire faith in his promises; yet we had better take the chance of his word for doing right than the certainty of the wrong which his adversaries avow."²⁰ These references to Bonaparte are among the most revealing to be found in the writings of Jefferson. They show an objectivity seldom found in men who take a vital interest in world affairs. He was not interested in Napoleon's personal success or failure; he upheld him and condemned him in turn, depending upon the righteousness of his objectives. "This success I wished him the last year," he says, "this I wish him this year; but were he again advanced to Moscow, I should again wish him such disasters as would prevent his reaching St. Petersburg. And were the consequences even to be the longer continuance of our war, I would rather meet them than see the whole force of Europe wielded by a single hand."²¹

While we have no sympathy with the theory that Europe should be prevented from uniting, all Americans are opposed to a forced unity under a Napoleon or a Hitler.

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Forced unity can result only in a loss of liberty for the individual and of self-determination for the separate states. Such a forced unity would be contrary to every element of Americanism, as demonstrated in the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine and in our treatment of our sister American Republics.

Jefferson was vitally interested in the welfare of all the nations of America. He was greatly concerned with the governmental development within these countries. He hoped to see republican governments set up throughout the western hemisphere, yet he recognized the fact that the United States had no right to interfere in bringing about such governments. He hoped for the day when there would be "no emperors nor kings in our hemisphere." While our own government was far from perfect, compared with those of Europe it was "like a comparison of heaven and hell";²² and he was hopeful that all the nations of the West would enjoy the blessings of similar good government. He would even have invited the countries of North America to join with us in a greater federation. He thought he had "reason to hope, the delegates of Canada will join us in Congress and complete the American union, as far as we wish to have it completed."²³*

* In keeping with this dream of Jefferson, I once undertook to bring Canada into the Pan American Union by a simple device. In the Neutrality Act of 1936 I proposed the wording of Section 1b, which exempted American Republics from the general application of that act. I knew that, since the Act of Westminster, Canada had in reality become an American Republic, and I hoped by the use of that term to recognize her as such and draw her into the Pan American Union. The British Parliament has no veto power over any of the acts of the Canadian legislature. The inclusion of Canada in our American Union of Republics would have made it possible to bring about more complete hemispheric co-operation by eliminating all the restraints of the Neutrality Acts. I talked with a Canadian and a

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In the early days of the Revolution, Jefferson seemed to regard Canada as the only one of the American states which might wisely be brought into an American federation; but at a later date he would have welcomed the other neighboring states. He looked forward to the time when Cuba would solicit incorporation into the Union, for he had "ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States."²⁴ He even expressed the expectation that Brazil would revolt and send the royal family back to Portugal, saying, "Although we have no right to intermeddle with the form of government of other nations, yet it is lawful to wish to see no emperors nor kings in our hemisphere, and that Brazil as well as Mexico will homologize with us."²⁵ Here is a dream of Western Hemisphere solidarity foreshadowing even greater harmony and unity than has been accomplished by our Pan American Congress and our good neighbor policy. Here, as in so many other important matters, Jefferson foresaw the future development of events and the inevitable necessity of united action on the part of the countries of the Americas if they would obtain and retain their independence. Today, with all the advancement toward the union of the American Republics, few of us have the faith and the vision which Jefferson displayed and fewer of us expect ever to see the fulfillment of the dream of Bolivar.

It is true that Jefferson sometimes spoke in the terms of the extreme isolationist. At one time he expressed the idea that it would be well to draw a line north and south in the middle of the Atlantic and keep European countries and

Britisher and both agreed that such a recognition would have advantages. But one of them remarked that he could not conceive of the people of Canada's ever allowing their country to be called a republic "because, you know, the Irish call Ireland a Republic!"

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those of America on their respective sides of this line. And he often said that the Americas should do everything possible to keep out the influence of Europe. But these expressions were prompted by the condition of utter confusion which existed in Europe. "During the present paroxysm of the insanity of Europe," he says, "we have thought it wisest to break off all the intercourse with her."²⁶ And again, "I consider Europe, at present, as a world apart from us, about which it is improper for us even to form opinions, or to indulge any wishes but the general one, that whatever is to take place in it, may be for its happiness."²⁷

Although he had earlier often given expression to the thought that England was the natural enemy of the United States, before his death he came to view her as the one country which had common interests with us. "These two nations," he said, "holding cordially together, have nothing to fear from the united world. They will be the models for regenerating the condition of man, the sources from which representative government is to flow over the whole earth."²⁸ One almost wonders if Jefferson foresaw the present struggle in which the survival of democracy in the world would depend so much on the successful co-operation of Great Britain and the United States. These two countries are today the great reservoir of democratic ideals. The acceptance of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter by the nations associated with them in the war against the Axis would undoubtedly also have been recognized by Jefferson as an enlargement of the basic ideals taken from "the sources from which representative government is to flow over the whole earth." If these ideals are to survive in the world, they will survive because of the united effort of the English-speaking nations and their allies. There can be little doubt concerning the stand Jefferson would take today.



12

The Single-Will State

THE WORLD HAS been in a political turmoil during the last generation. Something that is hardly definable has happened since the close of the World War in 1918. During this post-war period we have wavered between two great theories: one, an irresponsible negativism toward political immorality; the other, an acceptance of the idea that the state must stand sponsor for certain unalienable rights of man and become the protector of those rights.

The world has never seen absolute justice. That desirable condition would be as difficult of attainment today as when Plato described Socrates' discussion of it in the *Republic*. In discussing different theories we need not expect to find historical illustrations of absolute justice in some state. In political theories there are greater contrasts than are to be found in religious views of morality. All the great extant religions are in substantial agreement that the Golden Rule is the acme of religious morality, though they express it in varying forms. There seems little, if any, disagreement as to the fundamentals of religious morality.

But such is not the case in the realm of political philosophy. Here we find wide disagreement as to the funda-

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mentals of good government. The two extremes of theory have been set forth in their classic forms by Machiavelli and Jefferson. The former tells us that "matters should be so ordered that when men no longer believe of their own accord, they may be compelled to believe by force,"¹ while the latter says, "I know but one code of morality for men, whether acting singly or collectively."² Here we have the line drawn between what Lincoln calls right and wrong when he says, "That is the real issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles, right and wrong, throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time. The one is the common right of humanity, the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says 'you toil and work and earn bread and I'll eat it.'"³

These principles of right and wrong have been accepted through the centuries by all theorists, but in an opposite sense by the followers of the two schools. All those who have accepted the Jeffersonian philosophy have likewise accepted his thesis that "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty."⁴ They have believed with Jefferson that "All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God."⁵ This philosophy stands diametrically opposed to that of Machiavelli, that the Prince is made to rule and may therefore rightly resort to any extreme necessary to maintain his sway over the people.

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Since long before the time of Machiavelli, the struggle between these two principles had been going on. In the early despotisms of the East, where the ruler had absolute power, exercising the right of life and death over all the people and complete control over their property, there could, in theory, be no individual rights as such. The early political writers who defended the ancient single will or absolute sovereignty contented themselves with the aphorism, "There can be but one sun in the heavens." Since no one could stand in a place of judgment between the sovereign and the Heaven that had predestined him to rule, it was a simple matter of logic that "The King can do no wrong." How very recently did this idea disappear even in Europe with its boasted advances in other respects, only to be revived by Fascist theory! Wherever social and political judgments are to be made, it was said, there must be some authority in which resides the final decision, and only the state can assume this responsibility. Certainly not the people, who are, by definition, that which is to be governed. Thus taught Hobbes, whose Leviathan took the place among English theorists of Machiavelli's Prince. We too share in this view of sovereignty to the extent of the theory that the state cannot be sued without its own consent, and that, no matter how great the breach of justice, it cannot be held responsible for any wrong done unless, again, it consents to accept such responsibility.

By 1900 all but a few residuals of the Machiavellian philosophy had been universally repudiated in Europe. Even the survivors of the old Oriental despotisms were curbed by moral restraints. By the beginning of the present century most of the rulers of the world were bound by constitutions, for the most part containing bills of rights. Men were everywhere protected by law in both life and property. The idea of the right of the individual to "life, liberty and the pursuit of

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"happiness" had taken hold of the peoples of the earth. As a result of Lincoln's general order number 101 for the conduct of the troops in the field, even war had become a respecter of property and of men. Private property should not be taken without compensation, merchant ships should not be sunk without warning and only after the sailors had been removed. Freedom of the seas was an accepted doctrine and with it went the idea that free ships meant free goods. Non-combatants, women, and children were not to be fired on. Political morality, as Jefferson had understood it, seemed to be universally accepted. Wilson's great plea for international morality seemed argument enough to stop armies and cause conquerors to grant all the common rights to vanquished peoples.

So great had become the respect for the decent way of doing things that the great Japanese general, Nogi, sacrificed regiment after regiment, even his own sons, in the taking of 203-meter Hill at Port Arthur in order that no non-combatant, no unseen women and children, might be killed by bombs dropped by guns firing over the hill. That was in 1904. In 1932 the same Japanese dropped bombs on thousands of men, women, and children and willfully destroyed homes, schools, and hospitals at Chapei. Compare the order and fine reputation of the Japanese soldier in the Boxer Rebellion with the behavior of the troops which took Nanking. For thousands of years the world struggled up to Nogi's standards. Did Nogi's death symbolize the impossibility of men's holding these high standards? Let us hope not. Still, his death, like that of the Master and of Socrates, came to glorify an ideal.

What happened between 1904 and 1932? In that single generation of civilized man the world turned its back on ideals it had taken two thousand years to make universal.

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The dignity of the individual, discovered and given to us by Jesus, had received almost universal acceptance in law and act by the first decade of the century. By the third decade standards set for the protection and the evolution of this individual were as universally rejected by the world as Jesus Himself was rejected in the first century of His era. What brought about the sudden crumbling of those ideals?

It has—but I believe the answer is only superficial—been suggested that the World War with its changed methods of warfare—the submarine and the airplane—made the old rules impossible. Total war made women and children potential soldiers and munitions makers. It made of every commodity a potential munition of war. It made the morale of the civilian population an important military resource that must be destroyed. Hence no distinctions between soldiers and civilians could be made. Frightfulness and brutality took the place of restraint, the observance of rules, the acceptance of moral standards. But since these latter things are what we mean by civilization, man was once again thrown back into the “state of nature” in which Hobbes had pictured him, a mere brute struggling for survival against every other man. And it is to be remembered that it was this state of nature that justified Hobbes’ single-will state and Machiavelli’s absolute Prince.

Meanwhile, however, there had also appeared the Nietzschean philosophy, and with it the return of the master-slave concept which for two thousand years Christianity had been wearing down so that there had gradually been made possible the Jeffersonian theory of all men’s equality before the law. The Nietzschean philosophy attacked every fundamental of the Christian morality by giving moral justification to what, in Machiavelli and Hobbes, had been merely cynical expediency. Nietzsche identified might with right,

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glorified caste, encouraged race consciousness, preached the degradation of women to the role of mere child-bearing, absolved the superman of any moral obligations to the weak, and paved the way for modern Fascism and the single-will totalitarian state.

The inability of the Church to cope with this wave of anti-humanism and the disintegration of morality throughout Europe is one of the most disquieting realities of modern history. The Church's failure to keep abreast of the times, to provide a modern solution of political and social problems, must be held partly responsible for the present surge of aggression and moral irresponsibility which has horrified the civilized world and threatens the very existence of civilization. If man is only the brute—whether as ruler or subject—Jeffersonian democracy is doomed. If man can be made to appreciate his own majesty and his spiritual and social responsibilities, Jefferson may yet rise triumphant in his struggle with Nietzsche and Machiavelli. Yes, I believe that something other than war has changed the world. Machiavellian philosophy in its most virulent form has returned to plague the earth.

During the shelling of Chapei on January 29, 1932, it was not merely the callousness of war that brought forth the answer of the American naval captain to the question of a friend, as they watched the "show" from the top of a Shanghai hotel when the Japanese were pouring death into the defenseless suburbs. "What about the poor women and children." "Well, that's just too bad," said the captain. No, that reply was not merely the result of modern warfare. It reflected also the fact that as a nation we have been dodging our responsibility, and have fallen into the moral heresy of Cain who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This refusal to accept responsibility toward others has brought about the

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loss of the best in our civilization. The war is bad enough; but the drift away from restraint and rule, which are the basis of morality, is worse. War means death, but life without morals and restraint is the living death of the brute creation. For man the supreme question is not so much how to die, for that is only a matter of a few moments, but how to live.

America could put her name to a treaty which guaranteed her all the rights of the conqueror, but relieved her of all the responsibilities which the treaty imposed. And, continuing in this role of complete aloofness and expediency, she refused to distinguish between an aggressor and his victim and chose to treat them alike. This complete retreat from the moral responsibility to pass judgment showed a sense of justice that had grown lazy. The result of refusing to define the aggressor, has only been to encourage him on his path to certain war and bloodshed. Some modern Aesop should write a fable about a certain man named Uncle Sam who believed that "War will never come near me because I hate it so much." Merely hating war, like hating poverty and unemployment, will no more keep them from us than hating smallpox will save us from the pest house. Has not December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor taught us that?

America's reaction to those things which caused nations in Europe and Asia to seek satisfaction in the irresponsible leadership of direct actionists, was one of indifference. The philosophy which supports Hitler and Mussolini and the military clique in Japan is Machiavelli's defense of any act which preserves the authority to act. It is the twentieth-century adaptation of the principle that the "end justifies the means." It is Nietzscheism in action and it is the avowed enemy of everything America stands for, but it was not considered to be any of America's concern.

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Thus stands forth a great difference: Jefferson's world was one for moral man, acting in accordance with morally supported rules. Machiavelli's world is a world of the single man who knows no rule but his own and no curb on the manner in which it shall be used. Commerce between master and slave is despotism, wrote Jefferson. But still it has its restraints. Commerce between the Duce and the Italian, between the Führer and the German, is not merely despotism; it represents man in the state of nature pictured by Hobbes, a brutish mass ruled by the strongest of the brutes.

It is possible that I have presented Jefferson's theories in a form more ideal than those who have accepted his ideas have been able to live them. For the sake of fairness in comparison I should therefore like to present the theory of the single-will state in the words of one of its most eloquent advocates. The following was written in 1931 by Rudolf Hess and published in Germany before the great purge of 1934. Young Hess was one of the most able exponents of the philosophy of the single-will state and, until recently, was one of Hitler's most trusted assistants. He was the "idealist" of the Nazi movement, an influential youth leader, and the following article should present the Hitlerian theory in its most acceptable light:

"If we wish to know what will probably happen in the future, we must turn our eyes to the past. History repeats itself in general. The outbreak of similar epidemics calls for doctors with similar qualifications.

"What is the matter with the German nation?

"Even before 1914, the body corporate was not healthy. Brain workers and manual labourers adopted a mutually hostile attitude instead of respecting each other. Creative thinkers looked down with a certain disdainful pride on the

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men who used their muscles. Instead of providing them with leaders from amongst their own ranks, they left it to the others themselves, or to foreign suborners who cleverly made use of existing injustices to widen the breach.

“A terrible price had to be paid for this when the nerves of the nation suddenly gave way after the terrific strain of the four war years. The collapse was mainly the work of the same suborners and the assistants they found in the ranks of our opponents.

“Since then, Germany has been racked by fever and can hardly keep her feet. For years the country has been bled white as the result of the Treaty of Versailles; extravagant administration led to empty coffers, and the reckless printing of paper money to a grotesque devaluation of the currency. Brilliant fêtes, gluttony and extortion on the one hand and crying need, hunger and privation on the other. The last vestiges of our strength have vanished. The tension is extreme, and at any moment there may be an outburst of plundering, murder and rioting. Those who wish to come to the rescue are persecuted, while criminals are fêted. At the head of affairs is a parliament that does nothing but talk, and a ‘government’ that is worthy of the whole system.

“Let us look back. Criminals supported by the blind masses, plundering and burning, an orgy of dancing, blood and filth, the destruction of the national wealth, assignats and endless speeches in parliament—such was the French Revolution under mob rule. The nation was rescued from chaos by Napoleon as dictator. When the Roman Republic seemed about to suffocate in the mire, Caesar appeared. In our own times Mussolini rescued the crumbling Italian state from the Bolshevism that had already victoriously hoisted its red flag on the factories of Milan. The dictator is born

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out of the chaos due to the infirm rule of the people. That will also happen in Germany.

"Past dictators were admittedly unable to uphold the greatness of their nations. They used power to serve their own ends, and were carried away by it; and it was then the cause of their downfall. The man who will lead Germany back to greatness will also be a dictator, but, imbued with holy feelings of patriotism, he will subordinate all his own ambition to the sole aim of the welfare and greatness of his native land. He will restore Germany to its senses, just as the doctor treats one who is half mad.

"The foundation of all national greatness is national consciousness, or the determination of a nation to assert itself in the world. Napoleon found the powerful nationalism of the French Revolution already in existence. The German dictator will first have to reawaken and train it.

"Profound knowledge in all spheres of public life and history, the ability to appreciate the morals pointed, faith in the purity of his own cause and in the final victory, and unbending determination will give him the power of oratory that will carry the masses off their feet and win their applause. For the salvation of the nation, he will not shrink from using his opponents' weapons, such as demagogism, slogans and processions. Where all authority has disappeared, popularity alone creates authority. This has been demonstrated in the case of Mussolini. The more profoundly the dictator is originally rooted in the masses, the better does he understand how to deal with them psychologically, the less will be the distrust with which the working classes will regard him, and the larger will be the number of adherents he will gain among the energetic ranks of the people. He himself will have nothing in common

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with the masses—he will be all personality, like every great man. There is something that emanates from the power of personality that casts its spell over its surroundings, and attracts constantly increasing numbers. The nation is athirst for a real leader, free from all party haggling, for a leader sincere to the core.

“By the force of his eloquence, he, like Mussolini, will lead the workers to unyielding nationalism, destroy the international socialist Marxist views and replace them by the National-Socialist ideal. He will educate the manual labourers up to this ideal as well as the so-called intelligentsia. The public interest takes precedence of private interest; first the nation and then the individual. This combination of the principles of Nationalism with those of Socialism is the turning-point of our times. The leader must adopt the sound lines of thought of his day and, after consolidating them, throw them like tinder among the masses.

“Great political passion is a precious treasure; the feeble hearts of the majority of mankind have but little room for it. Happy the generation upon which stern necessity imposes a high political ideal which, great, simple and comprehensible to all, compels all the other ideas of the times to serve it.’ (Treitschke.)

“He will select his fighting troops from among the ranks of his followers that will increase like an avalanche (cf. the Italian Fascists). Their resoluteness is of more importance than their numbers. History is made by energetic minorities led by daring individual personalities.

“Dare to begin everything that must be done! Therein lies the greatness and the characteristic of leadership. Any one can easily dare to continue afterwards.’ (Stammler.)

“No matter whether the parliament continues its empty discussion or not—the man will act. Then it will be seen

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that, notwithstanding his many speeches, he knows when to be silent. His own followers will perhaps be the most disappointed. Appointments will be made according to the abilities of the individual, not by influence. The only thing he has in view is to attain his purpose, even if he tramples on his best friend in doing so. Once he has secured power, the real dictator is only pleasing to the few, if he serves the good of the whole.

“‘A leader must not try to please. He who tries to please is weak in the eyes of the man upon whose pleasure he depends. He who wishes to lead the way must himself represent the standard of what is pleasing.’ (Stammler.)

“The thrift of Frederick the Great’s days will be adopted as a principle. The administration will be freed from the burden of a superfluity of officials. The great organizer will divert all the energy thus released to creative work. Then, no less than in wartime, it will be a question of whether the nation is to continue to exist or not; in wartime millions were also able to perform unaccustomed work. A year of labour service, such as they have in Bulgaria, will provide for the physical training of the young.

“He will be a master of journalism. With his inexhaustible energy he will educate the people politically and morally with all conceivable means. The entire press, cinema, etc., will be freed from Jewish control and placed under the orders of the dictator.

“The suborners of the people will be deported from the country.

“A terrible criminal court will sit in judgment on those who betrayed the nation before, during and after the war. The work will be thorough in every respect, for ‘freedom and the Kingdom of Heaven are not to be won by half measures.’

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"But for all his severity, he will care for all sections of the population. By means of housing laws and the increased profit-sharing, he will safeguard the interests of the lower classes, but at the same time he will hold them in check with an iron fist.

"He will be free from the influence of the Jews and the Free Masons who are infected by the Jews. If he makes use of them, his powerful personality must always be able to disregard their influence.

"The destiny of a nation is determined by political more than by economic considerations. All internal reforms and all economic measures are fruitless as long as the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain remain in force. The leader will be thoroughly conversant with political geography and have a comprehensive idea of the world. He will know the nations and influential individuals.

"The foremost task is the restoration of the respect paid to Germany by the rest of the world. He will know what imponderables mean, that the old flag beneath which millions shed their blood in their faith in their nation is hoisted once more, and that the fight against the war-guilt lie must be fought out with every means at his disposal. Powerful national feeling at home and belief in itself strengthen a nation just as much as the vindication of its honour abroad.

"The confidence and respect of foreign countries will mean, economically, a rise in the value of the mark (cf. Italy's currency after Mussolini's accession to power). This same confidence and respect will mean, politically, the chance of concluding alliances.

"The final, but not the easiest, task is the anchoring of the new creation to withstand future storms. The structure must correspond to the inner being of the German people, and the builder must therefore also be in touch with the spiritual

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life of the nation. He will seek recreation in the art and literature of his people. Creative personalities are, as such, artistic natures.

"The work must not be designed on the scale of the pre-eminent superiority of the founder, otherwise the structure will totter when he is gone, like the states built up by Frederick the Great and Bismarck. New and independent personalities who can guide the steed upon which Germania is once more mounted will not flourish under the dictator. He will therefore perform the last great act: instead of exercising the last dregs of his authority, he will resign it and stand aside like the 'faithful Ekkehard.'

"Such is the idea we have of the dictator: intellectually acute, clear-headed and frank, passionate and yet self-controlled, cool and intrepid, carefully considering the consequences before making up his mind and withheld by nothing from rapidly executing his decision, without consideration for himself or others, pitilessly severe and yet at other times mild in his love for his people, untiring in work, with an iron hand in a velvet glove, and, capable of subjugating himself in the end."⁶

Here, then, is as sympathetic a picture of the ideal single-will state as its proponents could wish. Nationalism is placed above all other considerations. First comes the nation, then the individual. The energetic minority must rule the nation. The state must be ruled by a dictator. He will use the same weapons which he despises when in the hands of his enemies (no sense of right and wrong here). He will overrule parliament; he will trample his best friends under his feet, if necessary; he will control the press, the cinema; he will deport the suborners (those who teach doctrines contrary to his own); he will set up a terrible court to deal with those who betray the nation (act contrary to the will of the dic-

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tator); he will employ no half measures (the purge of 1934); he will safeguard the interests of the lower class (what he considers their interests) but will hold them in check with an iron hand. New and independent personalities will not flourish under the dictator. In brief, the dictator will set up his own standards and enforce his own will, regardless of the methods necessary for such accomplishment.

No theory of government could be farther removed from the ideals of Thomas Jefferson. The struggle between these two philosophies now rages throughout the world. Which will the people accept? On which side will the great forces of religion and morality array themselves? The world needs another Jefferson, but his efforts would be in vain until the people of the world throw off the attitude of irresponsibility and indifference of Cain's "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Can the threatening dictator rule destroy the results of the American Revolution? I contend that it cannot because the American Revolution has crystallized what has been the desire of men and nations throughout the ages. Man's right to be politically, socially, economically free can never be stamped out of the world, now that the principles of the Declaration of Independence have actually formed the basis of government of a great, strong nation. The American Revolution made our land one of manifest destiny. The world revolution in thought represented by Jefferson became to the American people a divine revelation of the purposefulness of the American experiment. Long before Jefferson was dead, the work of the founding fathers seemed to prove his concept of progress which had broken upon the European and American world like a new Renaissance. Already there seemed to be emerging a new world order—"annuit coeptis novus ordo seclorum." Already Washington's expressed hope that all the world would see our ways

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and imitate them and that someday he would be a citizen of the world appeared destined for fulfillment. Already the ball was rolling, and the mighty Jefferson himself could write that he and Adams would yet look down from heaven with joy at the fulfillment of this great dream.

Under heaven Columbus sailed and a new world was found. Here men of common hope from many climes made homes. These men brought to the New World tried and lasting ideals of the Old, but here they were nurtured in freedom, and when the motherland failed to cherish the best of its own, a clash occurred. This Jefferson justified and made purposeful by the Declaration of Independence. Led by Washington, patriots put down the mighty, and those of low degree sought safety in law. Blessed by peace, but not yet one in purpose, the fathers of the new nation covenanted for a more perfect union. They proposed a government to bring justice to life and liberty in pursuit of happiness. Thus thirteen States became one and democracy was given birth. Citizens, guided by a President, spoke their will through Congress, and that they might never lose their rights through the force of the past or the will of the dead, and that the letter of the law might not kill but its spirit live, a Supreme Court was established, and thereby the Constitution of the United States became a living oracle, fitting past purposes to present needs and freeing the minds of men from fear of the future. Loosed from powers that dull and thwart, the people, inspired with justice, caused the newly founded democracy to fill the vacant places. Imbued with zeal to make sleeping nature serve and the desert to blossom as the rose, they pressed on that many might earn blessings formerly garnered only by the few. Onward and upward and ever forward they advanced, unashamed to pray, willing to die, happy in planting that men might eat. Urged to use, bent on building,

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they never once turned back. Moving westward, by purchase, they added vast Louisiana. Next, south, they won by cession the Floridas. Then into Texas they went, which, by annexation, became part of the Union. By agreement with neighbors on the north, Oregon was divided, bringing lasting peace to a long boundary. After strife a sister nation to the south ceded and sold Mexican soil. To this mighty country, rich in plenty and secure in law, many thousands came to enjoy her benefits and admire her greatness. They built a nation of free men, a nation of thoughtful women, a nation of forward-looking children, where each, equal before the law, is master of himself but servant to all; where the majority rule, but the minority are protected; where kings may pause to see justice done, but where no king shall ever reign. This land, where men are responsible and restrained but free to think, to come, to go, and to do—so great in territory, so noble in tradition—nevertheless fought with itself, and under Lincoln men gave their all that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth. Wounds healed, the people again made one, no longer is there North and no longer is there South. With new faith in old purposes, Alaska was purchased, removing despotic rule from North America. To surround the land by a single sea, Theodore Roosevelt built the Panama Canal, which united a nation by dividing a continent. No longer are the waters of the earth separate. No longer is there East and no longer is there West. For God hath wrought that men may have joy and in this land of promise gain life abundant. Then a strife-maddened earth called democracy to its assistance. Men died that war might be no more. Victory gained, Wilson proposed and nations set up institutions for peace and legal process. The path of peace was not assured, but the way to

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peace was in the earth. The way to peace once more rejected, America again moves on in her mission to bring to man the freedoms of the better life.

Thus Washington's dream of "one great family, in fraternal ties" and of himself "a citizen of the great republic of humanity at large" is today democracy's promise for the future. No, the fruits of the American Revolution, Jefferson's sweeping and universal concepts, are not coming to an end.



13

World Citizen

THE TITLE OF this book was selected after long consideration. Why do I call Thomas Jefferson a world citizen? What is a world citizen? These questions have, I hope, been answered in the preceding chapters. Jefferson, it is true, was a typical American. He has, indeed, often been called the most typical American. But when we understand the universal applicability of the principles underlying his Americanism, we can also understand why it is precisely these principles, this Americanism, and the greatness with which he stood for them, that make him a world figure and a leading citizen of that ideal community which must someday embrace the world.

Jefferson was not a widely traveled man. He visited during his lifetime only a few of the countries of Europe; a large part of Europe and America and all of Asia were known to him only through his conversation and reading. But world citizenship does not rest on extended travel. Many a man who has circled the globe has returned home more a provincial than when he began his journey. Travel should make for a world viewpoint, but such an outlook is in no way dependent upon first-hand acquaintance with many

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countries. With bias and prejudice operating to prevent sound conclusions, travel may often serve only to fix pre-conceived notions. A man closed in by the walls of a cloister may be more the world citizen than one whose travels take him to every country of the globe. It is not the length of the journey but the direction of the thinking that makes a world citizen. "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him. So it is with traveling; a man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge." *

For a person of his day, Jefferson was a well-informed man. He had missed no opportunity to acquaint himself with the best literature of his day, and at the time he sold his private collection of books to the government to replace some of the volumes lost when the Capitol was burned, his library was one of the best in the United States. But neither can wide reading alone make a world citizen. Confucius, Aristotle, and Plato, with all their learning, were less world citizens than was Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth. No, neither travel nor study—nor wide acquaintance with the people, customs, or thought of many lands—can be depended on to produce this rare individual. World citizenship is not built upon experience or learning; it is built upon an attitude.

The world citizen must think and speak in universals. His word may be addressed to his closest friend or it may be shouted over the radio to the entire world, but the message must not be for any one group or class or nation. It must be a message which has significance for all to whom it finds its way. It must be based on the universal facts of human life and human desire. It is those of his utterances which are as true and as significant to an American today as they were

* Inscription on Union Station, Washington, D.C.

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to a Chinese in 600 B.C. that give to many of Confucius' teachings their world-wide appeal. The fundamental problems which man faces change but little from generation to generation. The teacher who sees to the bottom of the problems of his own day is likely to carry a message to all future ages.

The philosophy and the loyalties of the world citizen must be based on logical principles. He cannot erect a world-wide system of thought on a foundation of superstition, his foundation must be one which all thinking men can accept as sound. He cannot hope to build a universal political philosophy on the fable that his ruler and his people are the descendants of the gods. But when he says that the ruler must be the nearest to godhood of any of the people and that the people themselves should strive for an approach to that perfection represented by God, he is on universal ground. He cannot inspire universal loyalty to any one man or set of men; he must demand loyalty to principles of right. No system based on loyalty to party, which puts success of party above righteousness, can become universal. It is built upon sand and must fall. One may build a universal political philosophy on freedom, but not on freedom for the white race.

The world citizen must see the world as a unit. He cannot chop the world into blocks. He cannot make a geographical distribution of the benefits of his thinking. He must realize that no part of the world lives unto itself. He must know that no people can escape the influence of the conduct of its neighbors, that no bars insulate any nation against the outside world. The Tokugawas might lock the Japanese behind a wall of isolation, but the civilization of the West finally penetrates. As Jefferson says, a two-penny tax on tea started a world-wide struggle for liberty.¹ The

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invention of gunpowder in China brings about the overthrow of the feudal system in Europe. The birth of a babe in Bethlehem starts a movement that will yet sweep the caste system from the earth.

The world citizen must realize that all mankind has inherited common instincts, desires, and aspirations. All men are capable of happiness and sorrow, of comfort and pain, of mental anguish and peace of mind, of fear and confidence, of love and hate. He knows that all men seek personal security, that they rejoice in the sense of ownership. He does not forget that every man has a joy in the acquisition of new knowledge, whether it be merely the sight of a new animal in the jungle or the discovery of a great philosophical truth. He remembers that there are fundamental goods which serve all men in their universal quest for individual happiness.

The citizen of the world must recognize that the social instinct is universal, that men will continue to live together, that within the group individual selfishness causes friction and turmoil. There are certain duties which every member of society owes to the group in which he lives. Though manifest in different ways, the same fundamental principles of social behavior must be depended on to make social life possible.

The world citizen must have a universal sympathy and a desire to understand every problem of his fellowmen. He must not be ready to brush aside, as of no importance, the problems of groups foreign to his own environment or of individuals outside his own realm of association. He must not be afraid to learn from the peasant or to ask questions of the gatherers of firewood. He must be ready to recognize the good and condemn the evil in every nation, class, and individual. He must realize that every civilization is the

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result of long ages of evolution and adaptation, that to condemn or belittle any people is to fail to understand it.

The world citizen must free himself from all prejudices. National prejudices must not blind him to the virtues of other peoples or the vices of his own country. Is there a nation on earth which has not exalted itself above all others? Any nationalistic philosophy must fall short of universal appeal. No political economy based solely on the needs and traditions of one people can become world-wide. No universal system can be built around the idea of the God-given rights of any ruler, of the favored nation chosen by the gods to rule the world. Such a philosophy lacks all the elements of universality; it cannot even be forced upon the world.

Race prejudice can have no place in the thinking of the world citizen. There can be no chosen people. The very concept immediately marks off the majority of the peoples of the world as gentiles, barbarians, strangers, heathens, pagans—peoples not worthy of the good things of the earth. No philosophy based on Hebrew superiority—the people chosen of Jehovah and promised an everlasting inheritance—or on Aryan supremacy can become generally accepted. Already such concepts are circumscribed by the bonds that must finally choke them. Promised lands, chosen peoples, privileged classes must be satisfied to remain local. They bind with their own hands the shackles which hold them fast.

Religions, being local in origin, have found it difficult to outgrow concepts which restrict their universality. The term Catholic, applied to a great Church, represents an idea which attempts to break all bonds of space. In like manner the ancient concept of baptism for the dead, now practiced by the Mormons, seems to extend the idea of universality backward and forward indefinitely into time. But despite

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the broadening of scope in each case, there is no way for the ordinary man to fit into those great systems without immediately being set apart from his fellows. Since the idea of separating the sheep from the goats accompanies most religious endeavor, religious concepts generally bar the possibility of producing the world citizen. At the same time, the advance toward the concept of universality, the escape from the purely local aspects of religion, is one of the most evident facts of religious history. One by one the concepts which circumscribed the great religions have faded into the background. It is encouraging to recognize the gradual attrition of those ideas which restrict the application of religious concepts. Peter's dream at Joppa is still a nightmare to most of us, yet we do not deny the truth of the vision.

Similarly political units, being local in origin, have developed loyalties and antagonisms which make it difficult for any individual to think in terms of world citizenship. Thinking in terms extending beyond the geographical bounds of his own country has too often stamped a person in the mind of his fellows as disloyal and "unpatriotic." Citizens of one country have been encouraged to believe that some strange transformation in nature and in man takes place across the boundaries of their own state. Geography has played an almost unbelievable part in the limitation of man's thinking. Here again encouraging advancement has been made. The Federal Union, the United States of America, the Union of the Americas, the British Commonwealth, and the League of Nations all furnish evidence of man's ability to extend his loyalties beyond the limits of his immediate environment. And in doing so the individual loyalty incident to citizenship in a given state is in no sense weakened. Plural citizenship, which before our Civil War was thought impossible, is now fully accepted, and "All per-

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sons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." So easy and yet so wonderful! Here indeed is a great American blessing.

Class prejudice too has its restricting concepts which have hindered man's advance toward a philosophy of universals. But no scheme built around a privileged social or economic class, no system which limits the privilege of any group of society, can ever hope to have the support of the world at large. Hereditary bonds can have no place in the thinking of the world citizen. The limitations of caste and class privilege cannot be expanded into a world philosophy. No master-slave concept can become universal.

Where shall we look for our world citizen? Every man is, to a greater or lesser degree, a victim of his environment. Certain congenital prejudices circumscribe his vision and limit his sympathies. It would hardly be evidence of an understanding of human nature to hope to find one individual who fulfilled *all* the requirements of the world citizen. Rather, such a person must be a composite of many great men or even a product of the imagination. He may well be one set up as an ideal toward which modern man should strive—a member of the Kingdom of Heaven, a superior man, a superman, a cosmopolitan, a world citizen, call him what we will. He is a man who, though he may have been born at any time, is prepared to live and do his part in the modern world, a world made small by rapid transportation, instantaneous communication, and universal diffusion of the learning and culture of every nation.

From the standpoint of one seeking to attain this universal concept of the world, Jefferson lived and labored under certain definite handicaps. His birth on the frontier of a new country, the meager travel facilities of his time, the

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bitter struggles which were inseparable from the birth of a great movement for human emancipation, his practical political activity, his fight to preserve the new-born American system, the prevalence of slavery in his native community—all these are factors the cumulative effect of which might well doom a man to a provincialism of thought and outlook. While Jefferson was evidently the product of this environment, he rose to a remarkable degree above all the limiting elements of his surroundings. His insatiable thirst for knowledge carried him into all fields of learning; his appointment abroad gave him opportunity for travel; his devotion to the cause of liberty and equality provided him with a universal sympathy for the oppressed; his sound concept of human nature supplied stability and universality to his general outlook on life; his keen mind led him to sound conclusions which have yet to be refuted.

Jefferson was no walled-in philosopher. He was a man of action. His life and his ideas were therefore of necessity fitted into a peculiar local pattern. He could not always think in the abstract, nor could theory and idealism always determine his conclusions. It is true that he sometimes appeared provincial. Yes, he did once say that he had no interest other than the welfare of his own country. But is such a statement to obliterate all the evidences of the universality of his interests? Jefferson often thought of the institutions of this country as threatened by both internal and external forces; and his immediate concern, under such circumstances, was for the survival of those principles for which he had spent all the best years of his life. To criticize him for exhibiting, temporarily, an exclusive interest in this survival would be like finding fault with a drowning man for manifesting but little interest in the outcome of the World War.

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It is probably impossible to find in all the pages of history one who may be truly called a world citizen in the light of the requirements we have set down. But world-wide outlook, like every other human characteristic, is a relative virtue, not to be expected in its purity in any human being. It is with this thought in mind, that we should ask how Jefferson measures up to the requirements. To what extent are Jefferson's sympathies and theories of a universal nature? Did Jefferson really speak to the world, and did he have a message for mankind?

Most of Jefferson's biographers have been so absorbed in his Americanism that they have failed to note the universal nature of the basic philosophy around which all his thinking revolved. His world-wide sympathies and their significance seem, for some reason, to have escaped the notice of most significance of his interest in the welfare of the people of of his followers. Some have seen, yet failed to recognize, the other nations. Chinard, one of the most able of Jefferson's biographers, is typical of this group. Yet, while often making Jefferson little more than a provincial, indicating that "he was convinced that the American people was a chosen people, that they have been gifted with superior wisdom and strength"² and that "nothing was further from the character of Jefferson than to preach the gospel of Americanism to all the nations of the world,"³ he assures us that "He encouraged his European friends . . . to keep up their courage, to hope against hope. To all of them he preached the same gospel of faith in the ultimate and inevitable recognition throughout the world of the principles of American democracy."⁴ Although he says, "Surveying the whole situation from the 'mountain-top' of Monticello, the philosopher wondered at times 'whether all nations do not owe to one another a bold declaration of their sympathy with the one

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party and their detestation of the conduct of the other,'"⁵ he insists that Jefferson was still at heart an isolationist. Thus, while assuring his readers that Jefferson thought only in terms of that part of America where he happened to live, Chinard portrays for them a man of world-wide sympathy.

Yet there have been some who have recognized the true nature of Jefferson's concepts. Hirst saw the true Jefferson when he wrote, "Sometimes a Virginian, sometimes an American, always a citizen of the world, he glances with a reformer's vigilant eye at the abuses and oppressions of the old *régime*, or looks forward with the apostolic faith of a crusader to the new."⁶ With like insight, Dr. Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress, has caught the significance of Jefferson's place in history.* Truly, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him."

One day in North China, during the first year of the Chinese Revolution, a party of tourists encountered a parading mob of students carrying a strange-looking banner down a street. When the Americans asked the meaning of the flag, it was translated for them as "Put Foot Forward Party." They laughed heartily. "Aren't the Chinese strange people?" they said. I could not repress a smile myself as I remembered how much easier my Latin would have been if, when I first learned the verb *progredior*, my teacher would have explained to me that it merely meant "put foot forward." If I had learned *progredior* in that way, I should never have been bothered with the word "progress." The parading students had merely adopted the name of Theodore Roosevelt's projected Progressive Party. Yes, the Chinese Put Foot Forward Party was a strange organization!

Two facts mark Jefferson as a world citizen: his sympa-

* See Appendix IV.

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ties were unrestricted, for he hoped and expected that the blessings of good government would be enjoyed by every people on earth; his philosophy was based on principles of universal significance, on the nature and needs of man which are common to all mankind. It is true that he seemed to manifest certain limiting prejudices. Some were firmly fixed; yet examined in the light of his positive philosophy, they soon become of very minor significance. Though his conclusions may not always be entirely sound—as whose are?—we may still say that his sympathies were universal.

Jefferson showed at all times a peculiar preference for the tiller of the soil. His unfavorable comparisons of many other groups of citizens with the farmers indicate a bias of judgment which shows a lack of appreciation of the virtues of the artisan, the merchant, and the city dweller generally. While his estimate of the importance of contact with the soil is perhaps well founded, his fear of the city population has yet to be fully justified. But the important point to consider in this regard is the fact that Jefferson did not once suggest that his farmer class should be given any special favor (though in the early laws of Virginia land-ownership was one requirement for voters) or that the groups he distrusted be refused any of the rights of citizenship. He would neither bestow favor upon the one nor hinder the other. He would not limit the ballot or the advantages of education. He would not prevent intermarriage by law or custom. He may have misjudged the comparative worth to society of the farmer and other groups, yet all should have equal privilege. Did Jesus not say that the rich man should “hardly” enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? Yet he welcomed rich and poor alike into its fold.

Jefferson had a very marked prejudice against the ministers of the Church. He considered them a menace to reli-

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gious freedom, and some of his most bitter diatribes are aimed at them. Yet, Jefferson would not have imposed any political or social handicap upon them. And he did not let his battle with the clergy turn him against religion. He remained a deeply religious man, and those great fundamentals of religions to which he clung mark him as one of universal understanding.

Jefferson was against kings, royalty, and every domination. Yet he never was an enemy of government. He did, without doubt, have some prejudice in favor of America, for he saw here a fortunate opportunity for the development of a new, but universally important, form of freedom. This laboratory was all-important to him. The opportunity may have made his fellow countrymen temporarily a chosen people, but no blessing which they enjoyed was to be denied to any nation ready to struggle to attain it. Jefferson's prejudices were particular, not general. They were conditioned by very immediate circumstances and were of no wide significance.

Jefferson's interest in good government and in the happiness of mankind was never confined to his immediate surroundings and neighbors. Much as his time, thought, and effort were employed in the solution of local problems, his interest was always wide and his sympathy universal. As he looked upon the world and saw the ignorance and misery which burdened the masses of humanity, he could never bring himself to think that such a condition was either just or necessary. He had full faith that, through a long process of education, enlightenment would come to all peoples to lay the foundation for the improvement of their condition. "Barbarism has . . ." he said, "been receding before the steady step of amelioration; and will in time, I trust, disappear from the earth."⁷ Education was to destroy barbarism

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and bring about happiness. "I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource most to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man . . ." he says, "And I do hope that, in the present spirit of extending to the great mass of mankind the blessings of instruction, I see a prospect of great advancement in the happiness of the human race; and that this may proceed to an indefinite, although not to an infinite degree."⁸ This is hardly the statement of a provincial. The same general interest is manifest in a letter to Albert Gallatin, wherein he says, "I grieve for France . . . and I trust they will finally establish for themselves a government of rational and well tempered liberty. So much science cannot be lost; so much light shed over them can never fail to produce to them some good in the end. Till then, we may ourselves fervently pray, with the liturgy a little parodied; Give peace till that time, oh Lord, because there is none other that will fight for us but only thee, oh God."⁹

Far from thinking that the blessings of representative government were for America alone, he held that "The advantages of representative government exhibited in England and America, and recently in other countries, will procure its establishment everywhere in a more or less perfect form; and this will insure the amelioration of the condition of the world. It will cost years of blood, and be well worth them."¹⁰ Liberty and the blessings of freedom are for all. On numerous occasions he expressed the hope that the world might share in these priceless American possessions. "Possessing ourselves the combined blessing of liberty and order, we wish the same to other countries, and to none more than yours [France], which, the first of civilized nations, presented examples of what man should be."¹¹

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Are not these like words from the dust to give new faith to unhappy France?

Surely Jefferson is thinking in universal terms when he says, "I sincerely pray that all the members of the human family may, in the time prescribed by the Father of us all, find themselves securely established in the enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness."¹² And his faith in the final outcome is beautifully expressed in the sentence, "The ball of liberty is now so well in motion that it will roll round the globe."¹³ Could Jefferson return today, he would be disappointed that that ball had temporarily lost its momentum. His hope "that the whole world will, sooner or later, feel benefit from the issue of our assertion of the rights of man"¹⁴ seems far from fulfillment. Still, is that not the cause for which men are today giving their lives?

Jefferson well knew that the desire for liberty, manifested in America, was universal in its nature though not equally developed among the different nations. "The appeal to the rights of man," he says, "which had been made in the United States, was taken up by France, first of the European nations. From her, the spirit has spread over those of the South. The tyrants of the North have allied indeed against it; but it is irresistible. Their opposition will only multiply its millions of human victims; their own satellites will catch it, and the condition of man through the civilized world, will be finally and greatly ameliorated. This is a wonderful instance of great events from small causes. So inscrutable is the arrangement of causes and consequences in this world, that a two-penny duty on tea, unjustly imposed in a sequestered part of it, changes the condition of all its inhabitants."¹⁵

America was, in the opinion of Jefferson, to be an example to all the world of the possibility of freedom's being main-

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tained. ". . . even should the cloud of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe, this country remains to preserve and restore light and liberty to them. In short, the flames kindled on the 4th of July 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism; on the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them."¹⁶ Let us hope that this faith may bring about fulfillment of his prediction.

Surely it is by now evident to the reader that Jefferson was not only an American. His sympathies were universal. He expected all the benefits of good government, as he hoped to see it established in the United States, to spread throughout the world. He was opposed to all forms of oppression wherever they existed. He was against ignorance in any form, was for the diffusion of learning throughout the world. He was not afraid of the universal application of all the doctrines which underlay his own philosophy of government for America. He was the great world prophet of liberty.

Not only did Jefferson intend that good government should bring happiness to all mankind; he set forth a political theory which contains the germ of universality. It is based on fundamentals which make it applicable to every civilized society. In its basic philosophy and in its general working organization (not necessarily in detail) it will answer all the needs of modern man.

Man is by nature something more than a beast. He is a social animal provided by the Creator with those instincts which are necessary for successful social life. Man is made for happiness. That happiness depends upon the development of the individual and his freedom to live a life of self-determination, as far as the interests of the group will per-

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mit. The individual must not be submerged in society, and his activities must be curbed only so far as is necessary for the protection of his fellows and directed by others only when such direction is necessary for the general good. There are certain rights which even society cannot justly take from the individual: the right of personal liberty, of free expression, of freedom of worship, of reward for his labors. All men are equal before the law. It is the duty of society to insure that equality. Men are not equal mentally. There is a natural aristocracy, but not one based on birth or wealth. The naturally superior individuals should be given opportunity to rise to positions of leadership. The people will choose their leaders from among those of natural ability. All government is derived from the consent of the governed. The majority must rule. Education is the basis of all successful government. This education should be universal and free to all up to a certain level. The morality of the individual must apply equally to the group. There can be but one standard for men and nations. International intercourse and trade must be unhampered by artificial restrictions. The principle of representation makes the scope of united action unlimited. The entire world may organize for common action by application of this idea.

Jefferson's was a philosophy of progress. No generation is bound by the decisions of those who have passed away. Each age must meet and solve its own problems and must be left free to meet every new situation. His progressive philosophy is designed for a world of free, co-operative men. His is a message to all mankind. When the dictatorships have fallen of their own weight, when the philosophy of the single-will state has destroyed itself, then the Jeffersonian gospel of free men will rise to assume its destined place and lead the world to freedom and happiness.

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The modern world is a world of science. Man today wants to know how things work. Our efforts are meaningless unless Jefferson's insight into the nature of man and of his strivings for the well-being to which his nature entitles him is true. If man is not what the American Revolution assumed him to be, then America, though one of the most powerful nations, is not what we have thought it was. What is the motive power behind America, if it is not the fulfillment of the social and political ideals accepted by the fathers? Are we an accident? A free people will answer that question in the words of Jefferson, "I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."¹⁷

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APPENDIX I

Chronology

<i>Jefferson's Life</i>	<i>Jefferson's Times</i>
1743. Jefferson born Albermarle County, Virginia, April 13. Ancestry Welsh.	1744-48. King George's War.
	1755-63. French and Indian War. Seven Years' War in Europe.
1760. Entered William and Mary College. Graduated in 1762.	1763. Peace of Paris. Florida ceded to England. Louisiana ceded to Spain.
1767. Admitted to the bar of the General Courts of Virginia.	1765. Passage of Stamp Act.
1768. Elected Justice of Peace and Church Vestryman.	1766. Repeal of Stamp Act.
1769. Elected Representative to the Provincial Legislature. Introduced bill to permit masters to free slaves.	
1772. Married Mrs. Martha Wayles Skelton.	
1773. Appointed member First Committee of Correspondence.	1773. Boston Tea Party.

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| 1774. Published tract, <i>Summary View of the Rights of British - Americans.</i> | 1774. Passage of Boston Port Bill. Continental Congress, Philadelphia. |
| Elected Delegate to First Virginia Convention. | |
| 1775. Chosen to seat in Continental Congress. Appointed Chairman of Committee to draft Declaration of Independence. Chosen by Committee to write Declaration. | 1775. Battles of Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill. |
| 1776. Elected to Virginia Legislature. Began revision of laws of Virginia. Proposed Statute for Religious Freedom, Bill for Universal Diffusion of Knowledge, and Bill to abolish primogeniture and entail. | 1776. Adoption Declaration of Independence. |
| 1777. Surrender of Burgoyne. Washington at Valley Forge. | 1777. Surrender of Burgoyne. Washington at Valley Forge. |
| 1778. Treaty with France. | |
| 1779. Elected Governor of Virginia. | |
| 1781. Elected to Legislature of Virginia. Wrote <i>Notes on Virginia.</i> | 1781. Cornwallis surrendered. |
| 1782. Appointed by Congress to serve on American Peace Commission, but did not go to Europe. | |
| 1783. Elected Delegate to Congress. Wrote report on coinage system. | 1783. Peace Treaty signed. |
| 1784. Appointed by Congress, with Adams and Frank- | |

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- lin, to negotiate treaties
of commerce with
foreign nations.
1785. Made Minister to France.
1789. Appointed Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet. Began opposition to Hamilton.
1793. Resigned office of Secretary of State.
1796. Elected Vice President.
1800. Elected President.
1803. Louisiana Purchase.
1804. Re-elected President.
Lewis and Clark expedition.
1809. Retired to Monticello.
1818. Founded University of Virginia.
1826. Died July 4.
1787. Northwest Proviso.
1789. Beginning of French Revolution.
1793. Execution of Louis XVI.
1797. Bonaparte crossed Alps.
1799. Washington's death.
1808. Madison elected President.
- 1804-15. Napoleonic Wars.
- 1812-14. War with Great Britain.
1814. Napoleon sent to Elba.
1815. Battle of Waterloo.
1816. Monroe elected President.
1825. John Quincy Adams chosen President by House of Representatives.



APPENDIX II

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial

by

Otto R. EGgers

Architect of Thomas Jefferson Memorial

ONE OF THE first problems of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission, when they began their duties in 1936, was the selection of a suitable site for the Memorial. After consideration was given to several possible sites in different parts of Washington, a decision was reached to place it on the south shore of the Tidal Basin in Potomac Park. The specific point was fixed by the axis which passes north and south through the White House and crosses the Mall at a point near the Washington Monument. In other words, the Memorial is approximately the same distance south of the Washington Monument as the White House is north of it.

This completes the fourth point of the cross formed by the Mall and its principal transverse axis. The other points are occupied by the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, and the White House with the Washington Monument in the center of the cross.

The Memorial in this location utilizes the Tidal Basin as a natural reflecting pool, and the cherry trees lining the gently undulating south shore form a framework and setting for the architecture.

The design of the Memorial consists of a domed rotunda surrounded by a peristyle of Ionic columns. On the north side of the

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rotunda facing the Washington Monument and the White House, is a portico eight columns wide, surmounted by a pediment. The pedimental sculpture, the work of Mr. A. A. Weinman, consists of the five members of the drafting committee of the Constitution grouped around a central table. The figures depict Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston.

The architecture is classic in design and Jeffersonian in character and recalls Jefferson's love of the circular form as expressed in the Rotunda at the University of Virginia and at Monticello. The exterior material is of White Vermont Marble of the type known as Imperial Danby, and the peristyle consists of 25 marble columns of this material 41 feet in height. Each column drum has been carefully selected and matched for color tone and veining characteristics.

The Memorial Room, circular in plan, is faced with White Georgia Marble, with flooring of gray Tennessee Marble. It is 82 feet in diameter and 92 feet from the floor to the apex of the domed ceiling. The facing of the dome is of Indiana limestone designed with square coffers. It is interesting to note that all of the structural materials used in the Memorial are native, produced or fabricated within the United States.

In the center of the Memorial Room is a heroic figure of Thomas Jefferson in bronze, mounted on a marble pedestal—the figure, with pedestal, being approximately 25 feet high. The sculptor of this figure will be chosen by competition. In the circular frieze in the entablature of the Memorial Room is the following inscription by Jefferson: "I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

The building is elevated on a circular stylobate consisting of steps and terraces which raise the structure into a position dominating the surrounding terrain, and creating a more impressive effect from across the Tidal Basin. The area around the whole composition is landscaped into a dignified and formal picture.

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The Architects were motivated in their choice of a scheme by Jefferson's love and admiration for this circular form as mentioned above. The handsome Rotunda at the University of Virginia designed by him expresses this admiration, and the present design accepts and honors his choice, presenting it in a new guise more majestic, more monumental, just as his ideal of democracy has through national growth, triumph, and tragedy become a greater thing than perhaps Jefferson could foresee.



A P P E N D I X I I I

Address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt

On the Occasion of the
Laying of the Cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial
at Washington, D.C.
November 15, 1939 *

IN THE EARLIEST days of the Republic, under the Constitution, the Representatives of the several States were in substantial agreement that a National Capital should be founded in a Federal district set apart from the jurisdiction of any individual State. This purpose was in a true sense a symbol of a realization of national unity; and the final location of the National Capital proclaimed a proper compromise between the interests of the North, the South, the seaboard, and the interior, as they existed at the time.

In all of the hundred and fifty years of our existence as a constitutional nation many memorials to its civil and military chiefs have been set up here. But it has been reserved to two of these leaders to receive special tribute in the Nation's Capital by the erection of national shrines perpetuating their memories over and above the appreciation and regard tendered to other great citizens of the Republic.

Today we lay the cornerstone of a third great shrine—adding the name of Thomas Jefferson to the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

* Taken from the *U. S. Congressional Record*, January 3 to January 12, 1940, Appendix pp. 91-92.

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I have spoken of the national character of the District of Columbia itself, a capital which represents today the vitality, not of 13 Atlantic seaboard States but of 48 States which encompass the width of our continent.

This vitality envisages many-sided interests, and it is therefore fitting that among hundreds of monuments to famous Americans the three great shrines are dedicated to men of many-sided qualities.

Washington represented abilities recognized in every part of the young nation and in every part of the civilized world, for he was not only a great military leader, not only a great moderator in bringing together discordant elements in the formation of a constitutional nation, not only a great executive of that nation in its troublous early years, but also a man of vision and accomplishment in civil fields, talented engineer and surveyor, planner of highways and canals, patron of husbandry, friend of scientists, and fellow of political thinkers.

Lincoln, too, was a many-sided man. Pioneer of the wilderness, counsel for the underprivileged, soldier in an Indian war, master of the English tongue, rallying point for a torn nation, emancipator, not of slaves alone, but of those of heavy heart everywhere, foe of malice, teacher of good will.

To those we add today another American of many parts—not Jefferson, the founder of a party, but the Jefferson whose influence is felt today in many of the current activities of mankind.

When in the year 1939 America speaks of its Bill of Rights we think of the author of the statute for religious liberty in Virginia.

When today Americans celebrate the Fourth of July 1776, our minds revert to Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence.

When each spring we take part in the commencement exercises of schools and universities, we go back to the days of Jefferson, founder of the University of Virginia.

When we think of Benjamin Franklin as the experimenter

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in physics, we remember that Jefferson was an inventor of numerous small devices to make human life simpler and happier, and that he, too, experimented in the biology of agriculture and livestock.

In the current era of the erection of noble buildings we recognize the enormous influence of Jefferson in the American application of classic art to homes and public buildings—an influence which makes itself felt today in the selection of the design for this very shrine for which we lay the cornerstone.

But it was in the field of political philosophy that Jefferson's significance is transcendent.

He lived as we live in the midst of a struggle between rule by the self-chosen individual or the self-appointed few and rule by the franchise and approval of the many. He believed as we do that the average opinion of mankind is in the long run superior to the dictates of the self-chosen.

During all the years that have followed Thomas Jefferson the United States has expanded his philosophy into a greater achievement of security of the Nation, security of the individual, and national unity than in any other part of the world.

It may be that the conflict between the two forms of philosophy will continue for centuries to come, but we in the United States are more than ever satisfied with the republican form of government based on regularly recurring opportunities to our citizens to choose their leaders for themselves.

Therefore, in memory of the many-sided Thomas Jefferson and in honor of the ever present vitality of this type of Americanism, we lay the cornerstone of this shrine.



APPENDIX IV

Deposit of the Magna Carta in The Library of Congress

(November 28, 1939)

Remarks of
ARCHIBALD MACLEISH
*The Librarian of Congress**

MR. AMBASSADOR, IT is with pleasure that I accept the trust—pleasure that an American library should be honored with the custody of so notable a document—particular pleasure that the library so honored should be The Library of Congress. For the deposit in The Library of Congress of the Great Charter of 1215 has, or so it seems to me, a peculiar and a deeply moving significance. The Library of Congress is, as its name implies, the library of the people's representatives in the federal legislature. The Magna Carta is one of the great symbols, to all English-speaking peoples, of liberty within the law. The deposit of such a document in such a place is an action full of meaning for our time.

I am aware of course that the precise historical significance of Magna Carta is in dispute among the doctors. I am aware that a sceptical generation of scholars has found much to question in the view, so confidently held by Bishop Stubbs and Sir Edward Coke and Sir William Blackstone, that the barons who dictated the Great Charter "in the meadow called Runnymede between

* From *Time to Speak*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1941. By permission of the publishers.

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Windsor and Staines" were acting for the people of England to establish the people's rights. Fierce-sniffing philosophers like Professor Edward Jenks, who can smell out the errors of the intellect even in the Muniment Room of Lincoln Cathedral, after innumerable generations of vicars and occasional generations of the vicars' pigeons, have strongly implied that the barons of Runnymede were less concerned for the rights of the people of England than for the privileges they had planned to pocket for themselves.

But this dispute, like so many disputes between the doctors, has little reference to realities. The liberties of the people, throughout the popular experience of liberty, have often been established by those who had no interest in the people. It is not important in the long view of history whether the limitations upon absolute power were limitations imposed by a particular class for the intended advantage of that class, or whether they were limitations imposed by popular will. It is only important that the limitations should exist. The far-carrying phrases which you, Sir, have just quoted, may have been meant by their contrivers to safeguard the vested rights of a few land-owners and deer-killers in thirteenth century England. They have inured to the benefit of the people of seven centuries and of continents of which their authors never heard.

No learned dissertation will persuade the Americans that the document you have so generously deposited in their national library is not a witness to the ancient warrant of their rights. Nor will any amount of scholarly dissension blind them to the meaning of its presence here. The deposit of the Magna Carta in the library of the people's representatives in Congress is a plain and intelligible statement of a plain intelligible fact—the fact, namely, that the institutions of representative government are the protectors, and the only possible protectors, of the charters of the people's rights. For generations past we have taught our children in this Republic that our institutions of representative government were dependent on our constitutional charter for

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their existence. We have more recently learned, and now believe, that the opposite is also true: that without the institutions of representative government the charters of the people's rights cannot be saved.

There are those in this country, Sir, as there are those in yours, who have told us by direction and by indirection that we should abandon representative institutions. There are those who disparage the people's representatives in Congress and who lose no opportunity of publication or of public speech to explain that representative government is not efficient government in a complicated and industrialized society like our own. But though there is much talk there is little listening. For we have been brought to observe, in these last several years, that government by the people's representatives, whatever else it may or may not be, is the one government of which history has record under which the people's liberties have been secure.

Government by the people's representatives, like other governments, can be misled. Government by the people's representatives may, from time to time, mistake for true defenders of the people's rights, the false defenders of the people's rights—the demagogues, the same in every generation, who appeal to liberty in order to destroy it. Government by the people's representatives may, from time to time, substitute inquisitions and espionage for the equal protection of the laws, and may permit the inquisitors, in their reckless search for enemies of liberty, to break down liberty. But government by the people's representatives is the one government which has never suffered these dishonors long—the one government in all experience of governments, which has always, in the end, restored of its own will the people's limitations on its powers.

History has many curious and circuitous passages—many winding stairways which return upon themselves—but none, I think, more curious than the turn of time which brings the Great Charter of the English to stand across this gallery from the two great charters of American freedom. Thomas Jefferson, who was the true founder of this library as well as the true author of the

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noblest of our charters, would have relished the encounter. But Thomas Jefferson would perhaps have relished it with a different understanding from our own. For Jefferson was a man who dared to think of history in timeless terms, and of the rights of men as rights which had existed, and which would exist, in every time and every country: rights which nothing done by tyranny had ever yet destroyed or ever could.

To Thomas Jefferson, the deposit, beside the Declaration of Independence, of this Charter of the liberties of those from whom we won our independence, would not have seemed incongruous but just and fitting—an affirmation of the faith in which this nation was conceived.



A P P E N D I X V

Thomas Jefferson and African Slavery

by

JEFFERSON RANDOLPH KEAN *

WITH THE COMPLETION of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington there are three great memorials happily placed as regards the City plan of L'Enfant. In that plan the east-west axis of the city passes through the Capitol and along the Mall to the Potomac. At its west end is the Lincoln Memorial. The north-south axis passes down 16th Street, through the White House and Potomac Park and ends at the line of Maryland Avenue. Here is located the Jefferson Memorial. Where the two axes intersect in the Mall is the Washington Monument. It is appropriate that these three memorials should be so situated in regard to each other as the deeds of the great men which they commemorate have an historical linkage.

Washington, as a General, won the freedom of our Country. As President of the Constitutional Convention he was a mighty force in drawing the federated states into a more perfect Union. To Lincoln was given by a kind Providence the conduct of the great war which preserved that Union, and incidental to the war was the abolition of slavery. That the abolition of slavery was in

* Used by special permission of the author. This memorandum was prepared to be printed in the Annual Report of The Monticello Association. The substance of this statement was delivered by General Kean to the members of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission on February 21, 1941.

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Lincoln's eyes quite a secondary matter to saving the Union is known from his letter to Horace Greeley (Aug. 22, 1862) in which he said:

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it will help to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union—I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of the expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free. Yours, Abraham Lincoln."

Jefferson was, as a political leader and as the author of the Declaration, the associate of Washington in winning Independence. In his long fight against slavery he prepared the way for Lincoln's political career. While the association of Washington and Jefferson in their aims and careers is common knowledge, the connection between the life work of Jefferson and that of Lincoln is little appreciated.

Jefferson was a contemporary of Washington, although younger by eleven years. Lincoln was born three weeks before Jefferson laid down the Presidency after forty years of public service, and he was a youth of seventeen when Jefferson died. There was never of course any personal contact between the aged statesman of Monticello and the youthful rail-splitter in Indiana, but the spiritual contact was established when Lincoln began to study politics. He studied the early political history of the country since the Revolution very carefully, and knew the Jeffersonian policy of attack on slavery. This was (1) to prevent slaves from coming into the country and (2) to prevent its extension to the new territory west of the Allegheny Mountains. Jefferson while President had in 1808 given the final death blow to the slave

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trade in a special message to Congress—so that first battle was won before Lincoln was born.

Lincoln took up the fight on the second line of Jefferson's attack. In his Columbus Speech (Sept. 16, 1859) he said:

"In 1784, I believe, this same Mr. Jefferson drew up an ordinance for the Government of the country upon which we now stand; or rather a frame or draft of an ordinance for the Government of this country, here in Ohio, our neighbors in Indiana, us who live in Illinois, and our neighbors in Wisconsin and Michigan. In that ordinance, drawn up not only for the Government of that territory, but for the territories south of the Ohio River, Mr. Jefferson expressly provided for the prohibition of slavery. When the vote was taken upon it, a majority of all present in the Congress of the Confederation voted for it; but there were so many absentees that those voting for it did not make the clear majority necessary, and it was lost. But three years after that the Congress of the Confederation were together again; and they adopted a new ordinance for the Government of this north-west territory, not contemplating territories south of the River, for the states owning that territory had hereto refrained from giving it to the general Government; hence they made the ordinance to apply only to what the Government owned. In that the provision restricting slavery was inserted, and passed unanimously, or at any rate it passed and became a part of the law of the land. Under that ordinance we live."

This is a very clear statement by Lincoln of the facts, which connects up directly the work of Jefferson with the work of Lincoln.

Mr. Jefferson says with regard to this failure of the Continental Congress to forbid slavery in the territories south of the Ohio River, to-wit, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky:

"There were ten states present; six voted unanimously for it, three against it and one was divided; and seven votes being requisite to decide the proposition affirmatively, it was lost. The

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voice of a single individual of the state which was divided, or one of those which were in the negative, would have prevented this abominable crime from spreading itself over the new country. Thus we see the fate of millions unborn hanging on the tongue of one man and Heaven was silent in that awful moment!

"On the 16th of March 1785 it was moved in Congress that the same proposition should be referred to a committee, and it was referred by the vote of eight states against three." *

We all know that by the ordinance of 1787 for the country north of the Ohio River given by the State of Virginia to the Nation, slavery was prohibited in this territory when it should be made into states.

Let us now review briefly the connection of Jefferson with this question of slavery which was the spiritual bond between him and Abraham Lincoln. Jefferson, who was born in 1743 was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1769, being 26 years old. So far as is known, he only proposed one Act of legislation there prior to the Revolution. *It was to prohibit the importation of slaves into Virginia.* As we all know, he wrote into the first draft of the Declaration of Independence a fierce arraignment of the King for having encouraged the slave trade. The English historian Hirst thinks that its elimination by Congress was unfortunate. He says:

"A solemn stigma affixed to this infamous traffic by Congress and inserted in the Charter of American Rights, would have been a great instrument later on in the hands of those who felt with Jefferson that abolition by gradual steps was not merely required by the religion of humanity, but was essential to the future hopes and security of the American people. Jefferson had already given proof of his zeal in this cause; and he returned, as we shall see, again and yet again to the charge—the only powerful

* *Memoir and Correspondence*, Ed. by T. J. Randolph, 1829, p. 426. It should be borne in mind that the Continental Congress voted by States.

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statesman of his day in America who was willing to risk political fortune and social favor in an active effort to remove this dark blot from the institutions of his native land."

Soon after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson left the Continental Congress in order to take a seat in the Virginia Legislature (Oct. 7, 1776). He at once began work on the reform of the laws of Virginia to adapt them to a Republican form of Government, and was appointed Chairman of a committee to prepare these laws. He and his old law teacher, Chancellor George Wythe, did most of the work on this huge task which was in the form of 126 separate Acts which were introduced by members of the committee or others at various times during the years. One of these Acts was *to forbid the importation of slaves into Virginia*, which was enacted in 1778.

Jefferson was in France as our Minister during the time when the Constitution was enacted. It may be considered probable that if he had been a member of that Convention, he might have exposed and defeated the *joker* in Art. I, Sec. 6 of the Constitution which protected the slave trade from interference by Congress for twenty years. At the expiration of that time he was President, and in his sixth annual message to Congress congratulated them on the approach of the period at which the slave trade could be abolished. Congress, in accordance with his recommendation, passed the law forbidding the slave trade to take effect January 1, 1808. In 1809 ended his active political service of 40 years, and with it his ability to make further attacks on the institution of slavery. His correspondence thereafter shows his abiding interest in this cause.

It would seem that the Memorial will not be complete without some inscription which will show Jefferson's life-long interest in this cause, and will place this Memorial in its logical historical position with regard to the Lincoln Memorial. To do so certainly would not in any way trespass on ground sacred to Abraham Lincoln, but would make it clear that Jefferson was the sower who broke the ground and planted the seed, while

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Abraham Lincoln, in the fullness of time, took up the work, cultivated the crop and reaped the harvest. Abraham Lincoln in 1865 consummated the task begun by Thomas Jefferson in 1769.

It is just and fitting that every person of African descent who goes into Jefferson's Memorial and reads its inscriptions should take away with him the knowledge that his race is indebted to Thomas Jefferson as the American Statesman who began the fight against African Slavery in the United States.



APPENDIX VI

Jefferson and Architecture

by

FISKE KIMBALL *

WITH THE FOUNDING of the Republic, the new political order had far-reaching consequences. It called into being governmental buildings which were not only more important than those of the Colonies hitherto, but were of types radically new in the modern world. In all classes of buildings connected with political and social institutions, the democratic and humanitarian ideals of America brought into being arrangements very different from those that were traditional in Europe. Republican institutions gave a new significance and a new form to the buildings for the legislative assemblies of the novel republican states and of the great nation soon to be welded from them.

Most vital, however, was the very fact of independence itself. The fathers of the Republic were eager to throw off provincial dependence in other matters than that of sovereignty, to get rid of colonialism, of foreign authority. They wanted to do this even in language. Noah Webster, in his dictionary, sought to codify American usage. They wanted to do it also in art.

The leader of the movement was Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence itself. He hoped to make an artistic declaration of independence as well. He turned for authority

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to the ancients, to the Greeks and Romans whose republics then, in the freshness of modern republicanism, seemed very near. Thus he hoped to secure the respect of foreigners, without copying them; to be at once novel and correct.

He had excellent preparation for the task, which his political career as Governor of Virginia, Secretary of State and President gave him enviable power to accomplish. With the best private library of architecture in the Colonies, he had already made himself a competent designer before the Revolution, and in his own house, Monticello, had followed Palladio more closely than had any other American. While the war still raged he proposed re-building the Governor's Palace at Williamsburg on the lines of a classic temple, with fronts of eight columns; and, when the capital was moved to Richmond, suggested modelling the Governor's house there on Palladio's Villa Rotunda with its dome and porticos. Immediately afterward he went to Paris for five years as American minister, and travelled extensively in France, England, the Low Countries, Germany and Italy. His account books show that no month passed, scarcely a day passed, without his systematically visiting the buildings. What attracted him chiefly were the Roman monuments and their adaptations in the France of the hour. At Nîmes, as he wrote the *Comtesse de Tessé*, he gazed "whole hours at the Maison Quarrée, like a lover at his mistress"; in Paris he was "violently smitten with the Hôtel de Salm, and used to go to the Tuileries almost daily to look at it"; in southern France he was "immersed in antiquities from morning to night." "For me," he wrote, "the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of its empire."

His chance to turn the architecture of his country into a new channel came, while he was in Paris, with the building of the Virginia Capitol at Richmond. He saw in this "a favorable opportunity of introducing into the State an example of architecture in the classic style of antiquity." Not content merely with the use of classic elements, he proposed a veritable reproduction of one of the most famous antique buildings—the admired temple

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of Nîmes known as the *Maison Carrée*. The interior was divided to give rooms for the assemblies and the courts, the wall pierced with windows, but the general form and proportions remained unchanged. The vast portico was united with mass by an unbroken cornice. The simple and crystalline cubical form, the colossal scale of the columns gave the building a novel dignity, expressive of the majesty of the sovereign state. The portico was a frontispiece to all Virginia.

It has been little realized that the design long preceded anything similar abroad. The classic revival was indeed a movement which already had its beginnings in Europe, and which there also had the same ultimate ideal, the temple. Classic examples had already been imitated abroad in garden temples and commemorative monuments, but never on any such large scale, and never in a building intended for practical use, at which the conservatism and logic of the architects rebelled. Even in England, the leader in the classical movement, although Greek details began to appear as early as 1760, the temple form was not adopted bodily for any monumental building before 1830. The Virginia Capitol preceded the Madeleine in Paris, first of the great European temple reproductions by more than a score of years. Jefferson's insistence on the support of antique authority in the republic anticipated the attempt of Napoleon to gain the same sanction for his own empire. In the classical movement America was thus not merely a follower; rather, a leader in pressing it to its extreme consequences.

Although the design was but crudely carried out, the building deeply stirred the American imagination. Robert Mills, a leader in the next generation, wrote: "I remember the impression it made on my mind when first I came in view of it coming from the South. It gave me an idea of the effect of those Greek temples which are the admiration of the world."

The classical ideal thus embodied was ultimately to rule in America to a degree unknown in Europe, but a generation passed before its sway became universal. Meanwhile many build-

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ings began to show a larger dignity and a more classical character. These qualities appeared first in the public buildings, in which the other states and the new nation, following the lead of Virginia, housed their governments.

"When it is proposed to prepare plans for the Capitol," Jefferson wrote to L'Enfant in Washington, "I should prefer the adoption of some one of the models of antiquity which have had the approbation of thousands of years; and for the President's house I should prefer the celebrated fronts of modern buildings, which have already received the approbation of all good judges. Such are the Gallerie du Louvre, the Gardes meubles, and the two fronts of the Hôtel de Salm." At the instance of one of the Commissioners of the Federal City, L'Enfant asked for the plans of the Virginia Capitol, but they were lost in the catastrophe which followed.

L'Enfant's vaulting ambition and insubordination to all authority justified Jefferson's prophecy, years before, that a superintendent from Paris would consider himself "the Superintendent of the Directors themselves, and probably of the Government of the state also." For the designs of the federal buildings the authorities had to look elsewhere. Jefferson proposed a competition on the lines of those he had known in France. He drafted the requirements for the Capitol and the President's House, and when at first it seemed that no worthy plans would be submitted, himself sent in a design for the latter, modelled on his favorite Villa Rotunda. In the end a host of builders and amateurs competed.

Meanwhile the example of Jefferson was giving a direct impulse to more rigorous and severe classical treatment in house building. Retired from Washington's administration in 1793, he undertook the remodelling of Monticello in a more Roman style. The attics were pulled down to give an effect of a single story as in Roman houses and their French adaptations; a Roman dome was added over the salon as in the Hôtel de Salm. In the great houses of his friends in the Piedmont, at Montpelier, Edge-

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hill, Farmington, Ampthill, and Barbourville, he used the massive square white portico with telling effect against the walls of brick. When he became President he ordained for the White House the great circular portico of the river front, the long colonnades of the offices at either side.

In the University of Virginia, at the end of his career, he finally achieved his prophetic early ambition to fit the whole house within the rectangular mass of the temple, an extreme of classical ardor which had no parallel abroad. The students spread his example all up and down the South.

Among the colleges which now rapidly multiplied on every hand, the fruitful idea was again that of Jefferson. He wrote in 1810: "I consider the common plan followed in this country . . . of making one large and expensive building, as unfortunately erroneous. It is infinitely better to erect a small and separate lodge for each separate professorship, with only a hall below for his class, and two chambers above for himself; joining these lodges by barracks for a certain portion of the students, opening into a covered way, to give dry communication between all the schools. The whole of these arranged around an open square of grass and trees would make it, what it should be in fact, an academical village." This conception he realized, before his death in 1826, in the University of Virginia, which remains to this day the most beautiful of American groups.

Up and down either side of the shaded Lawn are the tall, storied porticos of the temple-like Pavilions, which once housed the classes of the ten schools as well as their heads. Between them, fronting the low dormitories, are the long white rows of the Colonnades. At the head, on the highest ground, stands the Rotunda, circular like the Roman Pantheon, with its dome and lofty, spacious Corinthian porch. It is in Jefferson's phrase, the perfect model of "spherical architecture," as the temples beside it are of the cubical. Beyond the lawn colonnades, facing outward, are second rows of dormitories, the Ranges with their red arches.

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Ordered, calm, serene it stirs our blood with a magic rarely felt on this side of the ocean. A single impress of form unites all the parts into an overwhelming artistic effect. The grandiose symmetry of disposition, the rhythmic alternation of pavilion and colonnade, the jewel-like simplicity of the major units, square faceted and round, with their contrast like diamond and pearl, the eternal recurrence of the white columns, as a treble against the ground-base of red walls, are elements of this effect, which in its perfection surpasses analysis, and tells us we are in the presence of the supreme work of a great artist.



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Note: This bibliography is not intended as a complete guide to available material on Thomas Jefferson. Such a list of books and other sources would cover many pages. The references listed are those consulted in the actual preparation of this volume. For the sake of simplicity, we have used Foley's *Jeffersonian Cyclo-pedia* wherever possible as the source of our quotations. All references to Foley are indicated by the paragraph number. References to other sources are to the page.

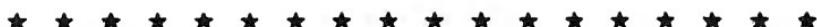
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